



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Yr Is-bwyllgor Datblygu Gwledig
The Rural Development Sub-committee**

**Dydd Iau, 4 Chwefror 2010
Thursday, 4 February 2010**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r is-bwyllgor yn bresennol
Sub-committee members in attendance

Mick Bates	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd yr Is-bwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Sub-committee Chair)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour
Brynle Williams	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Jane Davidson	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai) Assembly Member, Labour (the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing)
Elin Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig) Assembly Member, Labour (the Minister for Rural Affairs)
Rory O'Sullivan	Cyfarwyddwr, Adran Materion Gwledig, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Director, Department for Rural Affairs, Welsh Assembly Government
Dr Havard Prosser	Prif Gyngorydd Gwyddoniaeth Amgylcheddol, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Chief Environmental Scientific Adviser, Welsh Assembly Government
Gerry Quarrell	Pennaeth Uned Natur, Mynediad a'r Môr, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Nature, Access and Marine Unit, Welsh Assembly Government

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

Aled Elwyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Meriel Singleton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 1 p.m.
The meeting began at 1 p.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Prynhawn da. Croeso i'r cyfarfod hwn o'r Is-bwyllgor Datblygu Gwledig. Rhaid imi wneud y cyhoeddiadau arferol. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân y prynhawn yma, felly os oes larwm tân yn seinio, a wnewch chi ddilyn cyfarwyddiadau'r tywyswyr? Gwnewch yn

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Good afternoon. Welcome to this meeting of the Rural Development Sub-committee. I have to make the usual announcements. We are not expecting a fire drill this afternoon, so if an alarm should sound, you should follow the instructions of the ushers. Please ensure that

siŵr bod pob ffôn symudol ac unrhyw offer technegol eraill wedi eu diffodd, gan eu bod yn effeithio ar yr offer darlledu. Mae'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol yn gweithredu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg ac mae offer cyfieithu ar gael. Mae'r offer cyfieithu hefyd yn chwyddleisio'r sain os ydych yn drwm eich clyw. Peidiwch â chyffwrdd â'r microffonau; byddant yn dod ymlaen pan fyddwch yn cael eich galw i siarad.

all mobile phones and electronic gadgets are switched off, because they interfere with the broadcasting equipment. The National Assembly operates through the media of Welsh and English and headsets to receive the interpretation are available. The headsets also amplify the sound if you are hard of hearing. Do not touch the microphones; they will be turned on when you are called to speak.

[2] Nid wyf wedi derbyn unrhyw ymddiheuriadau. Yr wyf yn deall bod Joyce Watson ar ei ffordd ac y bydd yma mewn ychydig funudau.

I have not received any apologies. I understand that Joyce Watson is on her way and will be here in a few minutes.

1.01 p.m.

Ymchwiliad i Ddyfodol yr Ucheldiroedd: Craffu ar Waith y Gweinidog Inquiry into the Future of the Uplands: Scrutiny of the Minister

[3] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Heddiw, yr ydym yn parhau â'n hymchwiliad i ddyfodol ucheldiroedd Cymru. Yr ydym yn falch o gael y Gweinidog a Rory O'Sullivan yma i gyflwyno tystiolaeth. Fe'ch gwahoddaf, Weinidog, i wneud sylwadau agoriadol cyn i mi wahodd yr Aelodau i ofyn eu cwestiynau. Pe baech yn gallu cyfyngu eich sylwadau i ryw dri munud, byddai hynny'n dderbyniol iawn.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Today, we are continuing with our inquiry into the future of the uplands of Wales. We are pleased to have the Minister and Rory O'Sullivan here to present evidence. I invite you, Minister, to make some opening remarks before I invite Members to ask questions. If you could limit your contribution to about three minutes, I would greatly appreciate it.

[4] **Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig (Elin Jones):** Ynghyd â'r Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai, yr wyf wedi cyflwyno tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig i'r is-bwyllgor hwn. Wrth gychwyn, yr wyf am ddweud fy mod yn ystyried fod yr 'ucheldir' yn y cyd-destun hwn yn cyfeirio at yr ardal llai ffafriol yng Nghymru, sef tua 79 y cant o arwynebedd Cymru. Llynedd, cyflwynais strategaeth amaeth Cymru i bob pwrpas, sef 'Ffermio, Bwyd a Chefn Gwlad: Creu Dyfodol Cadarn'. Mae'r strategaeth honno ar gyfer Cymru gyfan, ond mae'n hollbwysig yn yr 80 y cant o dirwedd Cymru a ystyrir yn ardal llai ffafriol. Bwriad y strategaeth yw sicrhau dyfodol proffidiol a chynaliadwy i ffermydd Cymru ac i'r strwythur fferm deuluol sydd mor greiddiol i Gymru.

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): With the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, I have presented written evidence to this sub-committee. At the outset, I wish to say that I consider 'uplands' in this context to be referring to Wales's less favoured area, which makes up about 79 per cent of Wales's surface area. Last year, I published what is Wales's agriculture strategy, to all extents and purposes, namely 'Farming, Food and Countryside: Building a Secure Future'. That strategy is for the whole of Wales, but it is crucial to the 80 per cent of Wales's landscape that is considered to be a less favoured area. The strategy aims to ensure a profitable and sustainable future for Wales's farms and for the family-farm structure that underpins the industry in Wales.

[5] O ran yr ucheldir, yr wyf yn gweld bod cynhyrchu bwyd o'r tir hwinnw a rheoli'r tir yn briodol yn hollbwysig ac mae'r cyfan

On the uplands, I see that the production of food on that land and the appropriate management of that land are crucial and it is

yn rhan o bolisi Llywodraeth y Cynulliad o dan ein hymrwymiad i ddatblygu cynaliadwy. Mae fforwm yr ucheldir wedi'i sefydlu, gyda chadeirydd wedi ei benodi gennyf i, sef Derek Morgan; mae wedi rhoi tystiolaeth i chi a chyfarfûm i â'r fforwm wythnos diwethaf i drafod Glastir.

all part of the Assembly Government's policy under our commitment to sustainable development. The upland forum has been established, with a chair appointed by me, namely Derek Morgan; the forum has presented evidence to you and I met its members last week to discuss Glastir.

[6] O edrych ar y dystiolaeth yr ydych wedi ei derbyn hyd yn hyn, mae tipyn o drafod wedi bod ar Glastir ac ymwneud Glastir â'r ucheldir yn benodol. Mae'r Llywodraeth yn gwneud gwaith manwl ar hyn o bryd, yn gweithio gyda rhai o'r partneriaid yr ydych wedi bod yn trafod â hwy, i greu'r presgripsiynau terfynol ar yr agwedd Cymru gyfan ar Glastir. Mae cyfarfod arall gyda'r partneriaid yfory ac yr wyf yn bwriadu cyflwyno dadl ar Glastir yn amser y Llywodraeth tua dechrau mis Mawrth.

Having looked at the evidence that you have received thus far, there has been quite a bit of discussion on Glastir and its impact on the uplands specifically. The Government is doing detailed work at the moment, working with some of the partners that you have been talking to, to draw up the final prescriptions on the whole-Wales aspect of Glastir. There is to be another meeting with the partners tomorrow and I intend to table a debate on Glastir in Government time around the beginning of March.

[7] O ran cyfraniad Glastir at incwm ffermwyr yn yr ucheldir, mae'n ffynhonnell ariannol sydd gwerth tua £90 miliwn, ond mae'r taliad sengl yn ffynhonnell ariannol sylweddol mwy. Tua £290 miliwn y flwyddyn yw gwerth y taliad sengl i Gymru gyfan, ac mae cyfran sylweddol ohono yn mynd i'r ffermwyr yn yr ucheldir. Mae hynny'n gyfraniad uniongyrchol at incwm ffermwyr yn yr ucheldir.

On Glastir's contribution to the income of upland farms, it is worth about £90 million, but the single farm payment is worth substantially more. The single farm payment is worth about £290 million for the whole of Wales, and a significant portion of that will go to farmers in the uplands. That is a direct contribution to the income of upland farmers.

[8] Mae'r ucheldiroedd yn bwysig iawn yng Nghymru. Mae'r ffermydd yn yr ardaloedd hynny yn sylweddol iawn. Wrth gwrs, mae'r ucheldiroedd hefyd yn cynnig cyfleoedd ar gyfer tir fforestydd yn ogystal â thir amaethu.

The uplands are very important to Wales. There are very substantial farms in those areas. Of course, the uplands also offer opportunities as forestry land as well as agriculture land.

[9] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr wyf yn gwahodd Brynle Williams i ofyn cwestiynau ynglŷn â'r economi—yr ydych wedi cyfeirio at yr economi—a chymunedau hyfyw yn yr ucheldiroedd.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I invite Brynle Williams to ask questions about the economy—you have referred to the economy—and viable communities in the uplands.

[10] **Brynle Williams:** Prynawn da, Weinidog.

Brynle Williams: Good afternoon, Minister.

[11] Good afternoon, Rory.

[12] Mae'n bleser eich clywed, Weinidog, unwaith eto yn dangos eich cefnogaeth i'r ucheldir yn eich datganiad agoriadol.

It is a pleasure to hear you, Minister, once again showing your support for the uplands in your opening statement.

[13] In your evidence, you state that the uplands have a limited ability to respond to the increasing globalisation of agriculture. What action are you taking to help the upland managers to cope with and prepare for these changes?

Elin Jones: Fel y dywedais yn fy sylwadau agoriadol, y llynedd cyflwynais strategaeth y Llywodraeth ar gyfer hyrwyddo a chefnogi ffermydd teuluol ar gyfer y dyfodol. Mae'r strategaeth honno'n amlinellu'r gwahanol ffyrdd y gall y Llywodraeth roi cefnogaeth i'r fferm deuluol. Mae'r gwaith a wnawn ar draws ystod eang o waith y Llywodraeth ac o dan y cynllun datblygu gwledig yn rhoi cefnogaeth i ddatblygu busnesau ffermydd drwy Cyswllt Ffermio, a hefyd i weithio gyda'r farchnad, gan fod y farchnad agored yn rhan hollbwysig o sut y bydd y cynnyrch bwyd o'r tir yn dwyn incwm i ffermwyr yn y dyfodol. O dan y cynllun datblygu gwledig eto, drwy Agrisgôp, yr ydym yn gweithio gyda grwpiau o ffermwyr i gryfhau sut y maent yn ymwneud â'r farchnad. Mae'r gwaith hwnnw'n dwyn ffrwyth gyda nifer o grwpiau sy'n weithredol yn yr ucheldir.

Elin Jones: As I said in my opening comments, last year I introduced the Government's strategy for promoting and supporting family farms for the future. That outlines the different ways in which the Government can provide support to the family farm. The work that we are doing across a wide range of Government work and under the rural development plan provides support to further develop farm businesses through Farming Connect, and also to work with the market, because the open market is a vital part of how the food products from the land will provide income to farmers in the future. Under the rural development plan again, through Agriscope, we are working with groups of farmers to strengthen their involvement with the market. That work has borne fruit with many groups that are active in the uplands.

[14] **Brynle Williams:** Yn eich barn chi, sut y bydd yr ucheldir yn parhau? A fyddwn yn gweld ffermydd mawr iawn a llai o deuluoedd yn byw yn yr ucheldir, ynteu a fyddwn yn gweld ffermydd teuluol bach a mwy o bobl i gadw'r cymunedau hynny'n agored?

Brynle Williams: In your opinion, what is the future of the uplands? Will there be very large farms and fewer families living in the uplands, or will there be small family farms, and more people to keep those communities open?

[15] **Elin Jones:** Yn sicr, dros y ganrif ddiwethaf, gwelsom tueddiad i gollu poblogaeth o'r ucheldir ac i'r ffermydd dyfu'n sylweddol fwy. Fel y dywedais eisoes, byddem yn dymuno i'r strwythur perchnogaeth a thenantiaeth, yng nghydestun y fferm deuluol yng Nghymru, barhau. Mae'n wir i ddweud bod tueddiad sy'n parhau i gynyddu o ran maint ffermydd unigol. Mae'n anodd gweld y tueddiad hwnnw'n newid yn gyfan gwbl, ond ar ôl dweud hynny, yr wyf yn awyddus i weld y fferm deuluol yn parhau ac i weld pobl ifanc yn mynd i amaethu ac yn cymryd cyfrifoldeb dros y fferm deuluol; dyna pam yr wyf yn sefydlu cynllun ar gyfer cefnogi mynediad i ffermwyr ifanc. Felly, fy nymuniad i fyddai gweld y strwythur cyfredol yn parhau, ond i gryfhau agweddau busnes ar ffermydd unigol i'w galluogi i fod yn fwy llewyrchus i'r dyfodol.

Elin Jones: Certainly, over the last century, we have seen a trend towards depopulation in the uplands and towards a significant growth in farm sizes. As I have already said, I would like the structure of ownership and tenancy in the context of the family farm in Wales to continue. It is true to say that there is a continuing trend towards increasing the size of individual farms. It is hard to imagine that trend changing completely but, having said that, I am eager to see the family farm continue and to see young people going into agriculture and taking over the family farm; that is why I am setting up a scheme to support access for young farmers. Therefore, my aspiration would be for the current structure to continue, but to strengthen the business aspects of individual farms, enabling them to become more prosperous for the future.

[16] **Brynle Williams:** Diolch am yr ateb hwnnw. Mae hwnnw'n fy arwain at fy nghwestiwn nesaf.

Brynle Williams: Thank you for answering that. That leads me onto my next question.

[17] What work has been done to support the diversification—you made reference to Farming Connect—of upland farm incomes into areas such as tourism and other forms of diversification?

[18] **Elin Jones:** Mae twristiaeth yn gynyddol bwysig yn yr ucheldir ac yng nghefn gwlad yn gyffredinol. O ran arallgyfeirio ffermydd i dwristiaeth, mae Cyswllt Ffermio yn cynnig cefnogaeth i ffermydd i hyrwyddo syniadau newydd o ran arallgyfeirio incwm. Er enghraifft, os oes syniadau newydd yn y sector dwristiaeth, mae cefnogaeth o dan Cyswllt Ffermio i ddatblygu'r model busnes hwnnw ar lefel fferm unigol. Byddai hynny'n caniatáu i ffermwyr chwilio am fuddsoddiad ac i ddatblygu elfen newydd o incwm.

Elin Jones: Tourism is increasingly important in the uplands and in the countryside in general. On farm diversification into tourism, Farming Connect provides support to farms to promote new ideas for diversifying income. For example, if there are new ideas in the tourism sector, there is support under Farming Connect to develop that business model at the individual farm level. That would allow farmers to look for investment and to develop a new income stream.

1.10 p.m.

[19] Mae'n wir dweud, os yw unrhyw ffermwr yn gallu amrywio'i ffynhonnell incwm, yna bydd yn diogelu ac yn cryfhau ei fusnes i'r dyfodol. Gall cymryd mantais o'r potensial o ran twristiaeth fod yn fudd sylweddol i rai ffermwyr nad ydynt wedi ymgymryd â hynny hyd yn hyn. Fodd bynnag, mae'r gefnogaeth o'r Llywodraeth yn benodol o dan Cyswllt Ffermio.

It is true to say that if any farmer can vary their income stream, then it will safeguard and strengthen their businesses for the future. Taking advantage of the potential with regard to tourism could be of significant benefit to those farmers who have not done so thus far. However, the support from the Government is specifically through Farming Connect.

[20] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Hoffwn ofyn cwestiwn atodol ar sail yr hyn yr ydych wedi ei ddweud am ddyfodol yr ucheldiroedd yng Nghymru. Cefais yr argraff o'r hyn a ddywedwyd gennych—er efallai fy mod wedi camglywed—nad ydych yn gweld dyfodol i ffermydd lle mae ffermwyr yn dymuno ffermio yn unig a gwneud bywoliaeth o ffermio yn unig. A gredwch y bydd yn rhaid i bobl yn yr ucheldiroedd chwilio am ffynonellau ariannol eraill i ychwanegu at yr incwm uniongyrchol o'r fferm?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I would like to ask a supplementary question on the basis of what you have said about the future of the uplands in Wales. I got the impression from what you said—although I may have misheard—that you do not see a future for farms where farmers want only to farm and to earn their living from farming only. Do you believe that people in the uplands will have to search for other financial sources to add to the income earned directly from the farm?

[21] **Elin Jones:** Ni ddywedais y byddai'n rhaid gwneud hynny; dywedais fy mod yn credu y byddai cael ffynonellau amrywiol o incwm yn cryfhau eich model busnes ac, felly, ni fyddai'r risg yn gyfan gwbl mewn un maes. Dywedaf hyn oherwydd fy mod yn cael f'atgoffa o'r hyn a ddigwyddodd yn fuan ar ôl i mi ddod yn Weinidog, sef clwy'r traed

Elin Jones: I did not say that they would have to do that; I said that I believe that having a variety of income streams would strengthen your business model and, therefore, the risk would be spread over more than one area. I say this because I remember what happened when I first became a Minister, which was the outbreak of foot and

a'r genau. Ym mis Awst 2007, felly, caewyd y farchnad allforio dros nos ar gyfer yr ŵyn a oedd yn barod i gael eu marchnata ar y pryd, o'r ucheldiroedd. I nifer o ffermwyr, yr ŵyn hynny oedd eu hincwm blynyddol. Yr oedd felly risg i'w hincwm blynyddol—ac eithrio'r taliadau cyhoeddus—oherwydd iddynt gollu eu prif farchnad. Yn gyffredinol, byddwn yn awgrymu ei bod yn beth da i ffermwyr chwilio am amrywiaeth o ran incwm. Gallai hynny ddod drwy gynhyrchu amrywiaeth o fathau o fwyd, er enghraifft. Nid oes yn rhaid i ffynonellau ychwanegol ddod o rywbeth hollol wahanol i amaethu. Serch hynny, byddai cael sail amrywiol i'ch incwm yn lleihau eich risg. Dyna oeddwn yn ei awgrymu.

[22] **Brynle Williams:** Yr ydym yn falch o glywed yr hyn y bu ichi ddweud am wahanol ffynonellau incwm, ond sut y gallwn ni ddod dros y broblem o safbwynt caniatâd cynllunio mewn rhai mannau? Nid wyf yn sôn am gynlluniau mawr iawn, ond yr ydym weithiau'n clywed am gynlluniau sy'n cael eu rhwystro. A allwch chi weld unrhyw ffordd y gallwch helpu gyda hynny, Weinidog?

[23] **Elin Jones:** Credaf fod y Gweinidog sydd â chyfrifoldeb dros gynllunio yn dod i'ch gweld chi nesaf. Fodd bynnag, un mater sydd wedi bod o ddiddordeb i mi yn sgîl datblygu'r cynllun mynediad i ffermwyr ifanc i'r diwydiant yw nodyn cyngor technegol 6, sy'n caniatáu datblygiadau yng nghefn gwlad a thai yng nghefn gwlad yn benodol. Yr wyf yn edrych ymlaen at weld hynny'n cael ei weithredu yng Nghymru yn y dyfodol. Byddai hynny'n galluogi mwy o deuluoedd i fyw yn yr ucheldir oherwydd byddai modd codi tŷ ychwanegol ar fferm er mwyn i fwy nag un teulu ffermio'r tir hwnnw. Mae hyn yn bwysig wrth ystyried bod mwy o dir yn dod o dan reolaeth un fferm.

[24] **Brynle Williams:** Yr ydym yn croesawu'r cynllun sy'n rhoi mynediad i bobl ifanc i amaeth. Sut y gall ffermwyr ifanc gymryd mantais o'r cynllun hwn er mwyn ffermio yn yr ucheldiroedd?

[25] **Elin Jones:** Nid oes presgripsiwn penodol o safbwynt yr ucheldir yn y cynllun,

mouth disease. In August 2007, therefore, the export market was closed overnight for the lambs that were ready for market at the time, from the uplands. For a number of farmers, those lambs represented their annual income. There was, therefore, a risk to their annual income—with the exception of public subsidies—because they had lost their main market. In general, I would suggest that it is a good thing for farmers to search for variety with regard to income streams. This could be done through the production of a number of different types of food, for example. Additional sources do not have to come from outside agriculture. However, having a variety of income streams lessens your risk. That is what I was suggesting.

Brynle Williams: We are pleased to hear what you said about different income streams, but how can we overcome the problems relating to planning permission in some areas? I am not talking about very large developments, but we sometimes hear about plans being blocked. Can you see any way in which you might help with that, Minister?

Elin Jones: I believe that the Minister with responsibility for planning is coming to see you next. However, one matter that has been of interest to me in developing the scheme to promote entry by young farmers into the industry is that of technical advice note 6, which allows developments in rural areas, and for houses to be built in the countryside in particular. I look forward to seeing that happen in Wales. That would enable more families to live in the uplands because an additional house could be built on a farm, thereby allowing more than one family to farm that land. This is important as more and more land comes under the management of one farm.

Brynle Williams: We welcome the scheme that enables young people to enter the agriculture industry. How can young farmers take advantage of this scheme in order to farm in the uplands?

Elin Jones: The uplands are not specifically prescribed in the scheme, but, as 80 per cent

ond, gan fod 80 y cant o Gymru yn dir llai ffafriol, byddwn yn disgwyl bod canran go uchel o'r rhai sydd â diddordeb yn y cynllun yn dod o'r ucheldir. Mae cyfartaledd oedran ffermwyr yn yr ucheldir yn go uchel. Un agwedd ar gynllun y newydd-ddyfodiaid fydd gwaith ar gronfa ddata i greu cysylltiadau rhwng ffermwyr sydd am ymddeol ond sydd heb deulu na pherson amlwg i redeg y fferm yn eu lle a ffermwyr ifanc sy'n chwilio am gyfle i ddechrau ffermio, er mwyn iddynt ddatblygu model i weithio gyda'i gilydd. Byddwn yn sefydlu'r gwaith hwnnw—y 'matchmaking', os mynnwch chi—fel y gallwn helpu ffermwyr i adnabod y cyfleoedd i gael ffermwyr ifanc i redeg fferm yn eu lle.

[26] **Brynle Williams:** Yr wyf yn falch o glywed yr ateb hwnnw, Weinidog. Gwelaf hwnnw'n gam cyntaf ar daith hir, ond o leiaf yr ydym yn mynd i'r cyfeiriad cywir i gadw pobl ifanc yn ffermio, ac nid yn yr ucheldiroedd yn unig. Diolch i chi.

[27] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Symudwn yn awr i bwnc yr ardaloedd llai ffafriol a chynllun Glastir, y cyfeiriwyd atynt yn eich sylwadau agoriadol. Caiff Mick Bates ddechrau'r sesiwn gwestiynu.

[28] **Mick Bates:** Thank you for your joint paper, Minister. In particular, I would like to put on record one part of the paper, which emphasises that, in spite of the fact that agriculture accounts for 1 per cent of Wales's GDP, it accounts for 7 per cent of the rural economy and employs over 60,000 people. Recognition of that fact is important to understand the context of rural Wales. You highlighted the fact that 80 per cent of rural Wales is designated as made up of less favoured areas. A review of less favoured area designations is ongoing. Can you tell us where you are at with that review?

[29] **Elin Jones:** We are wholly involved in that review, because the LFA designation is one of interest, and it is important in the context of Welsh agricultural policy. I will let Rory update the sub-committee on the discussions and where we are with them.

[30] **Mr O'Sullivan:** The first thing is that the timetable for reaching our final position on the criteria is that they would take effect in 2014. At the current time, debate at the European level is about criteria that can be applied consistently across the EU in relation to climate, soil and topography. Welsh Assembly Government officials are fully engaged with the joint research council, which is the main body at the moment in the commission that is determining criteria. The criteria will be headline criteria that will give you a rough boundary, and then there will be secondary criteria for fine tuning. Also, we anticipate a decision on the final criteria to be applied in the autumn, but that will need to be agreed with the European Parliament under the new co-decision process that applies to agriculture following implementation of the Lisbon treaty. Thereafter, I expect work to be under way to put the new maps and the new boundaries into effect.

[31] **Mick Bates:** Thank you for that answer. Some of the things that you said fit in well

of Wales is less favourable land, I would expect a high percentage of those who are interested in the scheme to come from the uplands. The average age of upland farmers is relatively high. One aspect of the new entrant scheme will work on the database to create connections between farmers who want to retire but who are without family or a clear successor to take over the farm and young farmers who are looking for an opportunity to start farming, so that they can develop a model for joint working. We will establish that work—the 'matchmaking', if you like—as a means of helping farmers to identify the opportunities that exist to get young farmers to take over their farms.

Brynle Williams: I am pleased to hear that answer, Minister. I see it as a first step on a long journey, but at least we are taking the right road to keep young people in farming, and not just in the uplands. Thank you.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: We will now move on to the subject of less favourable areas and the Glastir scheme, which you referred to in your opening statement. Mick Bates will open the questioning.

with sustainable land management. However, the original designation of the less favoured areas was based largely on socioeconomic reasons. What account is taken of those socioeconomic reasons in this current review?

[32] **Mr O'Sullivan:** The commission has made it clear, in the light of the highly critical European Court of Auditors' report, that socioeconomic factors will not be among the criteria that would apply for the redesignation of boundaries.

[33] **Mick Bates:** Have you made an assessment of the impact that this change in the criteria will have on the number of farmers who will be in the LFA in Wales in future?

1.20 p.m.

[34] **Mr O'Sullivan:** We are still working on the basis of proposed criteria, so that work has not yet been finalised, but as the criteria debate advances we are keeping a close eye on what might be the impact for Wales. Our policy objective is clearly to ensure that we have criteria that can be applied consistently across the EU—a level playing field in that respect—and that will not disadvantage the current position with regard to LFA coverage in Wales. So, there is still a long debate to be had before we reach final conclusions, but that is our policy objective.

[35] **Mick Bates:** If I may mention Glastir now, Chair—I will go into more detail on Glastir in a moment—the scheme is due to start in 2013, and the review of the LFA will be completed by 2014. Have you considered the potential impact on the number of farmers eligible for Glastir following the LFA review? Surely the numbers may change because of the redesignation of the LFA area.

[36] **Elin Jones:** All farmers are eligible for Glastir at its all-Wales level. We are proposing an uplift of 20 per cent in the payment for farmers in the LFA. In introducing Glastir, we would work with the designation that we had at that time, and we will have to look at what, if any, redesignation has to happen from 2014 onwards. At that point, there may well be opportunities for transitional arrangements for any farmers affected in a negative way. We always look to try to secure agreement for transitional arrangements at that point.

[37] **Mick Bates:** I welcome the concept of transitional arrangements, but, if I understand you correctly, the Government has not made any assessment of the impact of a redesignation on potential entrants to the Glastir scheme. We heard in other evidence that there is concern from the industry about where the figure of 20 per cent as an uplift to existing LFA farmers came from. Presumably, when the scheme starts, the LFA designation will be as it is currently. However, if the designation from 2014 excluded farmers, would they lose the 20 per cent immediately?

[38] **Mr O'Sullivan:** I think that the first point to make is that the debate on the criteria has been going on since 2004. Glastir will be implemented from 1 January 2012, and the uplift of 20 per cent will apply to those who join the all-Wales element of Glastir if they are within the current LFA designation. At this stage, I cannot offer any cast-iron guarantee that the boundary might not change, because we are still debating and considering what the final boundary might look like. To go back to what the Minister said, looking at LFA coverage across all 27 EU countries—and this is what we are talking about—I would anticipate that, in certain member states, there will be quite a significant reduction in LFA coverage. Given that scenario, I would anticipate that you could not simply say that people cannot have an LFA payment any more because the boundary has changed. There would have to be some sort of transitional arrangement. Until such time as we see how that might operate, that might give us an option if the boundary in Wales is adjusted and some people in the Glastir scheme who were in the LFA now find themselves outside it. Again, I cannot give a definitive answer at

this stage, because we simply do not know the outcome.

[39] **Mick Bates:** I accept that.

[40] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I have a supplementary question on Glastir. You referred, Rory, to major changes within European Union countries and to the designation of less favoured areas. Were you suggesting that there will be major changes in Wales as well?

[41] **Mr O'Sullivan:** I said that our policy objective is to ensure that we maintain our current 79 per cent coverage of the LFA in Wales. Again, I cannot give absolute guarantees, but, in respect of the criteria about which we are talking, that is, soil, climate and topography, the assessments that we are currently able to make suggest that, if there are any changes, they would be minor. I have to issue a caveat on that by saying that that is on the basis of where we are in the debate at the current time.

[42] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I seem to remember that we had these discussions 10 years ago, Mick, in the committee on which we sat at that time.

[43] **Mick Bates:** I am grateful for those words, because we understand how difficult it is to give a firm answer at this stage. That is why Glastir, given its emphasis on sustainable land management, may well assist us under the new criteria.

[44] I would like to resolve an issue that you seemed to skip over. Where did the figure of 20 per cent come from, in relation to the uplift that you decided to give farmers in the current LFA?

[45] **Elin Jones:** You answer on the 20 per cent, Rory.

[46] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** It is called delegation, Rory.

[47] **Mr O'Sullivan:** It goes with the job. [*Laughter.*] The first thing to bear in mind is that the payment rates of Glastir, as a scheme under axis 2 of the rural development plan, have to reflect income foregone and costs incurred. It is not an income support measure alone. We know, from other calculations that we have been doing, that farming in the LFA incurs more cost and that income generation is slightly lower. If you look at the data on farm business income—we took the figures from 2005 to 2007, which were the latest figures available at the time of the Minister's statement—and if you analyse LFA livestock grazing and non-LFA, or lowland, livestock grazing, strip out current agri-environment payments, and then recalculate the projected receipts for an LFA producer in Glastir and for a participant from the lowland, you still get an income differential, but those figures demonstrate that a 20 per cent uplift is not overcompensating. That is the argument—sorry, 'argument' is the wrong word. That is the negotiation that we have with the commission: that, in putting forward the 20 per cent uplift, we are not overcompensating LFA producers who participate in Glastir but we are recognising, in the costing regime, that they have a higher cost and a lower income compared with lowland producers.

[48] **Mick Bates:** Are the data that you have just referred to available to us?

[49] **Mr O'Sullivan:** Data on farm business income are available from press notices and so on that we have produced.

[50] **Mick Bates:** Chair, could they be re-circulated, as that would be useful? I am sure that we have already received them, but the data to justify the 20 per cent uplift had escaped me.

[51] **Mr O’Sullivan:** It must be borne in mind that, when we are negotiating with the commission, we have to be careful that we are not talking about a payment that is specific to the LFA because of their costs and so on, as the commission would then say, ‘Why do you not retain a dedicated LFA support mechanism?’, and, under Glastir, there would not be that dedicated payment. So, it is a question of stripping out certain costs and putting Glastir in to demonstrate that it is about not overcompensating and not specifically recognising.

1.30 p.m.

[52] **Mick Bates:** I do not want to labour this point, but did you say that we could still retain the current type of LFA scheme?

[53] **Mr O’Sullivan:** No, what I said was that the decision that the Minister announced with Glastir was that we would not be having the dedicated LFA support mechanism—Tir Mynydd—that currently exists.

[54] **Elin Jones:** On the 20 per cent additional payment with regard to the LFA, from what I understand of the discussion between my officials and European Commission officials, we are being challenged by the European Commission officials to justify the 20 per cent. The costings work that Rory alluded to is part of our justification for the 20 per cent. The Agricultural Development and Advisory Service has done work for us on that; I know that the committee will do a piece of work on Glastir, and I would be happy for you to see that work by ADAS—we shared it with farming unions last week. That work could be shared with the committee for your review of Glastir.

[55] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** That would be very useful, Minister. We will be taking evidence on Glastir, which we will, of course, share with you.

[56] **Mr O’Sullivan:** I will just add that the 20 per cent issue in negotiations with the commission is part and parcel of the intense scrutiny that we will come under as part of the costings work that we have undertaken to justify the payment rates. That costings work will relate not only to the all-Wales level of the scheme, but also the targeted element of the scheme that covers all of Wales. If you want to see all the papers, there are about 800 of them altogether.

[57] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A note would be very acceptable, Rory.

[58] **Mick Bates:** Finally on Glastir, there is a section in Glastir about payments to encourage the installation of renewable energy production. We received evidence that, because of state aid rules, the installation of renewable energy production may not be subject to the feed-in tariff. If a farmer in the Glastir scheme installs a grant-aided system, would that farmer be able to receive feed-in tariffs or not?

[59] **Elin Jones:** Again, this is an issue on which officials are in discussion with European Commission officials. I will ask Rory to update us on where we are with those discussions.

[60] **Mr O’Sullivan:** What you are referring to is what we call ‘acers’, which is about energy efficiency with one element being microgeneration. As part of the very detailed negotiations that are currently under way with the commission, we have raised the issue about being able to use rural development moneys to make a contribution towards the cost of connection to the national grid. We are but one of five member states that have raised that issue. The commission’s response was that, at the moment, under the rural development plan and regulations, we cannot fund a national grid connection. The commission is looking at the issue, but I am not optimistic that we will see any change before the next programming period in 2014.

[61] On the feed-in tariff work, we are opening negotiations with the Department of Energy and Climate Change to see whether or not it would be flexible—although we could fund microgeneration and the Glastir energy efficiency element—so that the farmer would also be able to participate in the feed-in tariff scheme, and that the tariff that he or she would be paid would be adjusted to take account of the fact that a capital grant had been paid in the first place. However, that is an ongoing negotiation.

[62] **Mick Bates:** Thank you for that answer. When are you likely to reach a conclusion on that? The nature of the business is such that people will want to invest.

[63] **Mr O’Sullivan:** On the grid connection and the commission, as I said, I am not optimistic that we will get an answer that we could implement before 2014. On the feed-in tariff issue, it could take a few months.

[64] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** We will move on, then, to look at ecosystems, goods and services, and Joyce Watson will read the questions in this section.

[65] **Joyce Watson:** I apologise for being a few minutes late. I read your papers with interest, and I would like to know what work has been done to assess the potential for upland farms to access additional income from the delivery of ecosystems, goods and services. An example could be carbon storage or flood-risk management.

[66] **Elin Jones:** The development of Glastir as a scheme, both at an all-Wales level and particularly at its targeted level, will provide support for farmers to contribute to carbon storage and flood-risk management and be funded for that purpose. It is integral to the development of the targeted Glastir scheme that those ecosystems, goods and services are purchased by the Welsh Government from farmers. I am sure that you are aware that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs did some work and came to the conclusion that carbon trading by farmers in the UK in the private sector was not practical in the short term. That study was done by DEFRA last year or the year before, so it is not practical to promote that work at this point.

[67] **Joyce Watson:** What strategies do you have in place to develop new woodlands in the uplands? What support is available to upland land managers who might want to plant new woodland?

[68] **Elin Jones:** We have the ‘Better Woodlands for Wales’ scheme, which is available to land managers and landowners in the uplands to promote and develop woodlands. Its primary take-up has, in the past, been by larger forestry enterprises, but we are working with the Forestry Commission to look at how woodland can become a key part of the Glastir scheme, both in small and larger plantations on farms, and how that can be supported through Glastir.

[69] **Joyce Watson:** You have touched on this, but evidence has been submitted to the sub-committee suggesting that private sector investment might be used to pay upland land managers for the delivery of some public goods. One example cited was insurance companies paying for land management practice that reduced flood risk. To what extent would you support the development of this? I appreciate that you have just said that DCELLS did not.

[70] **Elin Jones:** DEFRA.

[71] **Joyce Watson:** DEFRA, sorry.

[72] **Elin Jones:** This is an area of work that is in its infancy globally, although some countries have developed models. I would be interested in seeing whether it is practical, in the

context of a relationship between farm and land managers, with larger businesses contributing to such a scheme. I have no doubt that it could end up being a pretty complex set of circumstances and a complex agreement between individual landowners and large corporations, and that the idea that a landowner-farmer agrees in perpetuity, almost, to farm or manage the land in a particular way may be one that would be of particular challenge to farmers in entering such agreements. It is not something that I close my eyes to; I think that it is an interesting model and I have no doubt that it will be one of debate and discussion. We are currently working as a public sector—as a Government—in funding some of these activities with land managers and farmers through Glastir.

1.40 p.m.

[73] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** O ran deddfwriaeth tir comin, yr ydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth oddi wrth mwy nag un mudiad y byddai cyflwyno Rhan 2 o Ddeddf Tiroedd Comin 2006 yn gryn gymorth er mwyn cyrraedd targedau bioamrywiaeth, ac y byddai hefyd yn cynorthwyo rhai ffermydd yn yr ucheldiroedd i gael mynediad i Glastir. A wnewch esbonio pam mae Cymru gymaint yn hwyrach yn cyflwyno Rhan 2 o'r ddeddfwriaeth na Lloegr?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: On commons legislation, we have received evidence from more than one body that introducing Part 2 of the Commons Act 2006 would be of great help in delivering biodiversity targets, and that it would also assist some upland farms to have access to Glastir. Will you explain why the implementation of this in Wales lags behind the implementation of Part 2 of this legislation in England?

[74] **Elin Jones:** Nid wyf yn siŵr a ydyw'n hwyrach. Nid ydyw wedi'i chyflwyno yn Lloegr. Credaf fod rhywfaint o waith pilot yn mynd rhagddo ar hyn o bryd mewn ambell fan yn Lloegr. Byddwn yn edrych ar y gwaith pilot hwnnw oherwydd mae'n siŵr y bydd y canlyniadau hynny yn berthnasol ac o ddiddordeb i ni beth bynnag.

Elin Jones: I am not sure that it is lagging behind. It has not been introduced in England. I believe that some pilot work is currently taking place in some areas of England. We will be looking at that pilot work because I am sure that those results will be relevant and of interest to us in any case.

[75] O ran datblygu'r cynllun Glastir, a sut mae tir comin a'r rheiny sy'n pori tir comin yn elwa o Glastir, byddwn yn edrych tuag at y cymdeithasau tir comin i gydweithio gyda ni ar gytundeb Glastir. Nid oes rhaid cael cynghorau comin—'commons councils'—fel y mae'r Ddeddf yn ei hyrwyddo, ar gyfer Glastir yn benodol. Mae'r cynghorau comin, fel y'u hamlinellir yn y Ddeddf, yn greaduriaid digon cymhleth yn eu hunain a bydd eu sefydlu yn ddigon cymhleth. Nid ydynt yn orfodol, i gychwyn, ac felly mae'n rhaid sicrhau bod pawb yn cydsynio—yr holl borwyr a'r sawl sydd â hawliau—i'w sefydlu, neu mae angen cael ymchwiliad cyhoeddus. Felly, er y bydd rhai ardaloedd comin yng Nghymru â diddordeb—yr wyf yn ymwybodol o ambell un sydd â diddordeb i ddatblygu hyn—nid wyf yn siŵr a fydd yn ateb i bawb. Yn sicr, nid oes rhaid cael y gofyniad hwn er mwyn gwneud yr hyn y gall cymdeithas ar y comin

On developing Glastir, and how common land and those grazing common lands can benefit from Glastir, we will be looking to the commons associations to co-operate with us on the Glastir agreement. We do not necessarily have to have commons councils, as promoted by the Act, for Glastir specifically. The commons councils, as outlined in the Act, are quite complex in themselves, and establishing them will be quite complex. First, they are not mandatory, and therefore it is necessary to ensure that everyone agrees—all the grazers and those who have rights—to establish them, or there would have to be a public inquiry. Therefore, although some commons areas in Wales would be interested—I know of a few that are interested in developing these—I am not sure whether it would be a solution for everyone. Certainly, this is not a requirement in order to do all that a commons association can do to access Glastir.

ei wneud o ran cael mynediad i Glastir.

[76] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yn ôl yr wybodaeth a gawsom gan DEFRA, y bwriad yn Lloegr yw cyflwyno Rhan 2 yn gynnar yn 2010. Nid wyf yn ymwybodol unrhyw oedi pellach, felly y mae ar fin dod i fodolaeth yn Lloegr. Nid oes sôn amdano yn dod i fodolaeth yng Nghymru ar hyn o bryd, felly mae dipyn yn hwyrach o ran hynny. Yn eich llythyr chi at y pwyllgor, dywedasoeh eich bod yn gobeithio bod mewn sefyllfa yn weddol fuan i dderbyn ceisiadau er mwyn sefydlu cynghorau comin yn 2013, pan ddaw Glastir i rym. O wrando ar eich ateb yn awr, yr oeddech yn awgrymu nad ydych yn gweld y byddai'r cynghorau comin hyn yn fanteisiol i ffermydd sy'n defnyddio tir comin i gael mynediad i Glastir ar gyfer y tiroedd hynny.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: According to the information that we received from DEFRA, the intention in England is to implement Part 2 early in 2010. I am not aware of any delay, so its implementation is imminent in England. There is no mention of its coming into force in Wales at present, so it is lagging behind quite considerably. In your letter to the committee, you stated that you expect to be in a position quite shortly to accept applications for the establishment of commons councils in 2013, when Glastir is implemented. From listening to your response just now, you were suggesting that you do not see these commons councils to be of benefit to farms using common land to access Glastir for those lands.

[77] **Elin Jones:** Dywedais nad ydyw'n angenrheidiol i gael cyngor comin i wneud hynny. Gall y cymdeithasau o bobl sydd â hawliau ar y comin gydweithio â ni o ran datblygu cytundeb comin.

Elin Jones: I said that it is not necessary to have a commons council to do that. Associations of those who have rights on common land can work with us in developing a commons agreement.

[78] You wanted to say something, Rory.

[79] **Mr O'Sullivan:** For the purposes of Glastir, you need to separate the implementation of the Commons Act 2006 per se, particularly the complex work required to update the registers, from what we are planning to do under Glastir. We intend to work with graziers, helping them financially and with dedicated support to set up a grazing association in order to bring much more of the common land in Wales into sustainable land management regimes.

[80] Currently, we only have seven agreements that relate to common land in Wales under Tir Cynnal and Tir Gofal. We feel that it is very important to bring Glastir into effect on as much common land as possible. As I was saying, for these purposes we need to separate out what may potentially be happening under the Commons Act 2006, and whether those people who currently have rights wish to set up a formal commons council, from the way that we are going forward with Glastir, under which we would be looking to establish either a lead grazier or a grazing association that covers 80 per cent of those who have grazing rights on a common. The commons element of Glastir would be separate from a Glastir contract relating to the home farm.

[81] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Are you saying that there is no intention of implementing Part 2 of the Act in Wales? It is coming in now in England. Do you have a date when it will be implemented in Wales?

[82] **Elin Jones:** We gave a date in the letter.

[83] **Mr O'Sullivan:** The Minister's letter of 8 January said that we would very shortly be implementing Part 2 in the light of a consultation last year. This is a complex area of work, particularly when 40 per cent of farmland is not registered. Once we have been able to implement Part 2 we will have to get the registers up to date, and the Minister referred to the potential for further delay if we get into public local inquiry scenarios. All I am saying is that,

in relation to Glastir, we are taking it forward in a very particular way that should also help to clarify issues on rights to commons, so that when the Commons Act 2006 is implemented we will have addressed some of the issues. We already have a separate Glastir commons group, which will be meeting later on this month, to take things forward.

[84] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I understand the way that you are going about getting over the problems with Glastir and access to it, which seems to be something that will be helpful to those farmers. However, I do not understand why it is taking so long to implement the Commons Act 2006 in Wales. Is it more difficult in Wales than in England? I know that there is a larger less favoured area in Wales, but surely the process is the same in Wales as it is in England.

[85] **Elin Jones:** No. It is probably less of a priority for me and my officials than the implementation of Glastir.

[86] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** That is the answer that I was looking for about five minutes ago; we got there eventually.

[87] **Mick Bates:** I want to go back to comments made about the complexity and registration issues. The key question is when the register will be reopened so that people can reregister or register new parts and resolve the problems that have emerged over the last few years. As you know, there are complex issues with regard to ownership of some of the land. When is the register going to reopen so that these can be resolved?

[88] **Elin Jones:** Consultation on Part 1 of the Act happened last year. I hope to be in a position where I will be getting advice from officials in the near future on the conclusions of that consultation and to answer some of the points that you make. As you have concluded, this is a complex piece of work that will have to be undertaken by us as a Government, and local authorities, to renew the registers. It would not only be complex but it would be time-consuming and officer-consuming to undertake this work, so you can understand why we have to do this work in a way in which we can resource it to enable us to do it effectively. That is where you come into competing priorities.

1.50 p.m.

[89] **Mick Bates:** I understand the resource issue, but the length of time that many of these problems have been known demands a resolution soon. You use the term ‘in the near future’—that is a bit nebulous. Will you give us a firm answer as to when these registers may be open to resolve so many issues, which are causing many business problems, as I am sure you are aware?

[90] **Elin Jones:** No, I cannot give you a firm answer, because I have not had the conclusions and the advice from officials following the consultation. I accept the point that I need to give you, and even have for myself, a better answer than ‘the near future’.

[91] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Trown at Brynle i orffen gyda chwestiynau ar y ffordd ymlaen a gwaith trawsadrannol. **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** We turn to Brynle to conclude with questions on the way forward and cross-departmental work.

[92] **Brynle Williams:** In your evidence, you state that the Welsh Assembly Government seeks to strike a balance between the different claims on the uplands, yet several organisations have told the committee that there is currently no agreed vision for the future of the uplands. What is the Government’s vision for the uplands and how has this been shared with stakeholders?

[93] **Elin Jones:** As I suggested in my opening comments, the uplands form a large part of the land mass of Wales and the agriculture and forestry land mass of Wales. Therefore, the vision for the uplands is the same as the vision for rural areas and our farming communities, which was outlined in the ‘Farming, food & countryside’ document last year. All our Government policy comes under the umbrella of our aspiration to ensure sustainable development. Therefore the role of the uplands in that is particularly important, and I have no doubt that you will have the opportunity to question the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing on that.

[94] **Brynle Williams:** This question intrigues me. Can you explain what you mean in your paper by:

[95] ‘Food production for an increasingly hungry world may come into conflict with environmentalism focusing on a “last ditch” defence of reducing or vanishing ecosystems’?

[96] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I think that we would all like to know what it means.

[97] **Elin Jones:** I would like to know who wrote it. [*Laughter.*] I know who cleared it, and it was me. It is probably not the clearest way of saying that you have competing demands on any one piece of land and that those competing demands change over time. Food production and the environmental importance of any piece of land can sometimes be in conflict but can sometimes be in harmony as well.

[98] **Brynle Williams:** I would like to pursue that, but time does not allow it. What processes are in place to ensure that there is collaboration and co-operation between Government departments on work completed in the uplands?

[99] **Elin Jones:** I refer you back to the answer that I gave earlier. The strategy on food, farming and countryside is a Government strategy and is primarily led by my department, although the work on sustainable development is primarily led by the Minister for sustainability. However, it cuts across all Government departments, and the role of the uplands in meeting some of the requirements of sustainable development is increasing into the future.

[100] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr iawn ichi, Weinidog. Ni welaf fod unrhyw gwestiynau pellach. Diolch i chi ac i Rory O’Sullivan am y dystiolaeth yr ydych wedi ei chyflwyno i ni. Os ydych yn teimlo eich bod eisiau ychwanegu unrhyw beth at yr ymchwiliad, byddem yn falch o glywed oddi wrthy. Yr ydym yn ddiolchgar am eich cynnig i gyflwyno nodiadau am yr agweddau mwyaf dyrys ar y dystiolaeth. Cawn doriad yn awr.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you very much, Minister. I do not see that there are any further questions. I thank you and Rory O’Sullivan for the evidence that you have presented to us. If you feel that you have anything to add to our inquiry, we would be pleased to hear from you. We are grateful for your offer to provide notes on some of the more complicated aspects of the evidence. We will now take a short break.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 1.55 p.m. a 2 p.m.
The meeting adjourned between 1.55 p.m. and 2 p.m.*

Ymchwiliad i Ddyfodol yr Ucheldiroedd: Craffu ar Waith y Gweinidog Inquiry into the Future of the Uplands: Scrutiny of the Minister

[101] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Croeso, Weinidog, i’r sesiwn hon am yr ucheldiroedd. Yr ydym yn ddiolchgar am eich parodrwydd i

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Welcome, Minister, to this session on the uplands. We are grateful for your willingness to come here.

ddod. Yr ydym hefyd yn croesawu Gerry Quarrell a Havard Prosser sydd gyda chi. Hwyrach y gallech eu cyflwyno a'u cyfrifoldebau yn eich sylwadau agoriadol.

We also welcome Gerry Quarrell and Havard Prosser who are with you. Perhaps you could introduce them and their responsibilities in your opening remarks.

[102] **Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai (Jane Davidson):** Diolch yn fawr iawn, Gadeirydd.

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): Thank you very much, Chair.

[103] I will start by introducing the officials I have with me. On my left is Gerry Quarrell. Gerry is head of nature, access and marine and is based in Aberystwyth, fortuitously located alongside parts of the Countryside Council for Wales, the Forestry Commission Wales and the agriculture division, to join up the thinking. Havard Prosser is our chief environmental scientist, and he is a shared resource between my department and Elin's department.

[104] In my initial contribution, I hope to help the committee, because I noticed when I was preparing for this meeting that we had not given you a definition of 'ecosystems services', which is so important to the way in which we have underpinned our evidence report to you from both departments. The ecosystem services approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, and which recognises that people, with their cultural and varied social needs, are an integral part of ecosystems. The principles should operate across all sectors. This is important to us in the context of our responsibilities for delivering sustainable development principles. An important new aspect of ecosystem services is that the economic assessment of ecosystems is a key driver for their delivery. We are working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and other devolved administrations to improve the way in which such services can be valued.

[105] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Thank you, Minister. That definition is very useful, and we will start with questions on ecosystems goods and services.

[106] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you for that definition, Minister, because that was to be my first question. You have also answered the second part mostly, about what you have done to promote the concept across other Government departments. You mentioned a couple of other departments.

[107] **Jane Davidson:** It might be helpful if I were to say a little more about how we are taking it forward. When we look at developing policy in our department, we use the mechanism of a policy board, bringing together representatives of our department, and sometimes of other Assembly Government departments or stakeholders who have a key interest, such as the Environment Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and others. For about a year, we have been working on how we in our department can take an approach more focused on ecosystems services, because a healthy, natural environment can provide valuable benefits for people, directly or indirectly.

[108] We have also been working with the UK Government through the Foresight programme, which looks at science and modelling the ecosystems services approach. We are represented on the steering group for that project. We are working on a UK national ecosystems assessment to help us to understand our ecosystems services better in Wales. Havard could give you more details on these projects, because the modelling for these is done from a scientific perspective. The Cambrian mountains pilot project is looking at testing some of these ways forward.

[109] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Dr Prosser, do you want to add anything?

[110] **Dr Prosser:** The national ecosystems assessment is a UK project, but the Wales environmental research hub at Bangor is leading on contributing the Welsh chapter. The assessment happens in two phases, essentially, looking at the current state of the natural environment. This started with the millennium ecosystem assessment, published in 2005, but is now being brought down to a UK level. The first stage of that involves trying to evaluate, or put together an inventory, of what exactly we have in UK terms, and what it is delivering. The second element explores future scenarios. Essentially, we will look at the baseline and at the potential scenarios for economic development, climate change, and so on, and we will assess how they affect our baseline services in Wales.

[111] **Jane Davidson:** To add one other point, through the spatial planning areas, which are the responsibility of Jane Hutt, we are looking at the networked environment region across the south-east spatial planning area as a pilot scheme, with a view to extending that to other spatial planning areas to run alongside the low-carbon region approach. So, this will cut right across Government initiatives.

[112] **Mr Quarrell:** Could I add something, too? The pilot schemes that the Minister referred to—the one on the Cambrian mountains and the other in the south-east spatial plan region, that is the networked environment region—are important because, when we talk about ecosystem services, some people's eyes glaze over straight away, and the concept is not widely understood. The phrase is not in common parlance. We have to do work like this to ground this stuff in something real and meaningful for the people who are managing the land of Wales. That is why the pilot schemes are important.

[113] **Mick Bates:** That is a big challenge.

[114] **Mr Quarrell:** It is.

[115] **Dr Prosser:** The water framework directive has provided a catalyst for this because it means that, instead of looking at small, individual bits, one has to look on an integrated, catchment basis. I sometimes think that it should be called the soil and water framework directive, because the soil issues are important and drive the water framework directive and its compliance.

[116] **Joyce Watson:** As is often the case, you have answered my next question. Is there anything that you would like to add? You have mentioned the pilot schemes, but is there anything that you would like to add about support or the promotion of the research that you are engaged in?

[117] **Jane Davidson:** I am not sure whether we mentioned the work being undertaken by Bangor University on the polyscape tool—a land-management tool in the Cambrian mountains. We are part of a big, UK-wide project called Living with Environmental Change, and we meet that team annually—[*Interruption.*] I mean as Ministers. My officials meet them a lot more regularly than that. [*Laughter.*] Elin and I meet that team jointly, and it is also looking at longitudinal study work. There is a huge amount of research going on, and we all need to learn very quickly the most effective mechanisms for doing this—and they will change according to landscapes, catchments and opportunities in that area.

[118] **Dr Prosser:** Bangor University is doing work to try to identify win-win situations and win-lose situations to optimise ecosystems services when you have conflicts. It is not all moving in the same direction. For example, food and fibre production is an ecosystem service, and other services may be affected by that in a negative way. Therefore, we need to look at how to establish overall value and how it can be improved.

2.10 p.m.

[119] **Joyce Watson:** Absolutely. Thank you for that. In evidence, several organisations have highlighted the potential for using private sector investment to fund the delivery of ecosystem services. Would you support that and the development of such schemes? An example is insurance companies funding land management practices that might reduce the risk of flooding.

[120] **Jane Davidson:** There is a sound concept for this area but, as Elin said in her contribution, this kind of approach is still in its infancy, not least because, to secure the investment, we would have to be certain about the level of flood protection in place, and it would have to be secured in perpetuity so that we can be assured. There may be specific circumstances in which that would work, and we certainly have no problem with the concept. Our officials have had some discussions with the Environment Agency about this, and I think that there have been some discussions between Environment Agency officials and the water utility companies, but it is very early days for this approach, and we need to be convinced of the efficacy of the outcome. That would be critical since it would be part of a network of arrangements across Wales.

[121] **Joyce Watson:** I accept that point.

[122] **Mick Bates:** To follow on from your point about efficacy, the ecosystems concept can cover a very small area right up to a large catchment area—and a river catchment would be an ideal example. When you have all this scientific knowledge, how do you prioritise the ecosystems to get the best value for Government money—or do you not use the tool to find where you can best spend Government money?

[123] **Dr Prosser:** The work that has been done so far has been to look at how we value these services. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published a paper in December 2008, I think, setting out a sort of methodology for doing that. Frankly, the issues are quite complicated. Although the provisioning services, such as food and fibre, are clearly ones that you can put some numbers to in value terms, as you move further down the list to what we call regulating services, which look at air quality, climate and water regulation, and then further down the list to cultural services, the definitions for which refer to such things as spiritual and religious value, inspiration of art, social relations and aesthetic values, you are into very complicated areas. To take as an example something a bit more solid, as it were, we are looking at how to value landscape, which is clearly a major concern in the context of the Welsh environment. There are a number of economic techniques for doing that, looking at things such as people's willingness to pay and other proxy values that you can put on it. In a sense, one must put together some sort of balance sheet that at least states what all these values are.

[124] The next stage, in toxicology terms, is to ask 'What is the dose response?'

[125] **Mick Bates:** A lethal dose? [*Laughter.*]

[126] **Dr Prosser:** That is, if one invests a certain amount of money, what does that achieve? Establishing those relationships then becomes the issue: what would that do to improve the total ecosystem services? So, unless you know that sort of relationship, it is quite complex and difficult.

[127] **Jane Davidson:** This is in the same territory as the previous debate about the way that the sustainable development scheme operates. There are some indicators that are more important than others in this context, but, generally, it is the issue around interdependence that is critical, because one damaged part can affect damage to the whole system. So, you must take all those elements into account and then get the right balance. Taking this kind of

approach leads to decisions that will have longer-term beneficial effects. We want to take the sustainable development approach as the overarching principle, in that we take all factors into account—not just the immediate economic factors or the other factors in this context—and bring together economic, social and environmental factors, because it is about the living and the non-living elements. It is about how we use our natural environment to our advantage, because the healthier the natural environment, the better it is for us.

[128] **Mick Bates:** The tool is not currently used to prioritise Government expenditure.

[129] **Jane Davidson:** We have been looking across our department to see how we can transfer what we do on the environmental side to the ecosystem services approach, to bring what we do into the context of the sustainable development scheme, although we already have that obligation to deliver on the sustainable development scheme as effective as possible. So, there is that ongoing work, which Havard outlined, and the opportunities to pilot schemes. We mentioned the Cambrian mountains and Elin also spoke to you at some length about Glastir, which is another pilot of the ecosystem services approach. We also have the Dyfi biosphere—the UNESCO biosphere—which is supporting an ecosystem services approach. So, there is a number of initiatives and it is important to ensure that this high-level articulation of ideals is tested on the ground, taking that holistic approach.

[130] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rhaid inni symud ymlaen yn awr, ond fe ddown at gynlluniau ynni adnewyddadwy, Mick. Yn gyntaf, fe'ch cyfeiriaf at y safleoedd cadwraethol yn yr ucheldiroedd gan ofyn am eich asesiad chi o'u cyflwr ar hyn o bryd. Pa ganran ohonynt a dybiech sy'n cyrraedd statws cadwraethol ffafriol a beth ydych chi'n ei wneud i wella'u cyflwr yn gyffredinol?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: We need to move on now, but we will come to renewable energy schemes, Mick. First, I refer you to the conservation sites in the uplands and ask you for your assessment of their current condition. What percentage of them do you believe reach favourable conservation status and what are you doing to improve their condition in general?

[131] **Jane Davidson:** Of the conservation sites in the uplands of Wales, 40 per cent are in favourable condition according to our last assessment. I issued a written statement on our commitment to biodiversity in this international year and on the targets set by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Union for this year a few weeks ago. It is a complex statement because it includes information from a range of departments, not just from my department, on the actions that we are taking right across the Assembly Government. The biodiversity action plan process is important. We are looking, by the end of this year, to publish a natural environment framework, and we have a substantial amount of work going on. An all-Wales project has been established to take forward the outcome in the environment strategy for Wales of bringing designated sites into favourable condition. We have put in place an actions database for international sites, sites of special scientific interest and other protected sites, such as the special areas of conservation and special protection areas. Data are now available for all those sites.

2.20 p.m.

[132] We are also looking at specific projects. For example, the National Trust has already given evidence to you regarding the agreement relating to land on the south side of Snowdon to restore heath, blanket bog and valley side woodland, and the removal of grazing from Cwm Idwal to restore the arctic, alpine and mountain habitats. So, specific pieces of work along those lines are taking place. We are moving away from our traditional focus on small sites and species protection to look at a wider habitat as a whole, and creating places that are resilient to change, which enable species to move or adapt. I outline that in the written statement.

[133] It is worth saying that no country will meet the biodiversity targets for this year. However, we are absolutely determined, in taking our biodiversity action planning progress forward, to ensure that we do what we can, even though there is a number of major challenges—not least climate change—to effectively deliver on that. We also have work taking place with the stakeholders themselves in contributing towards making sure that we have a new action plan, which will be the natural environment framework that I will be launching at the end of the year. We will be holding a big conference on biodiversity in September to bring all the work together and test it on people before we launch the natural environment framework.

[134] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr ichi, Weinidog. Gwelaf fod Mr Quarrell yn dymuno siarad. **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Thank you, Minister. I see that Mr Quarrell wishes to speak.

[135] **Mr Quarrell:** The committee's inquiry has focused on the uplands. I would just like to add that, on what the Minister said about sites in favourable conservation status, it is estimated that approximately 66 per cent of upland conservation sites are already covered by section 15 management agreements that the Countryside Council for Wales employ or under Tir Gofal. Two thirds of the important sites in the uplands are already covered by management agreements working towards favourable conservation status, and Glastir, as it comes on stream, should help to move that figure further upwards.

[136] The Minister mentioned the National Trust scheme. That is important, but if you look at every local authority area in Wales, you will find useful stuff taking place on the ground to help to move these important conservation sites into good status. For example, one of the more spectacular ones, which you might have seen on the news last week, is the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority using helicopters to airlift bales of brush heather. I was not sure what brush heather was—

[137] **Mick Bates:** Cut and bale.

[138] **Jane Davidson:** Yes; cut and bale.

[139] **Mr Quarrell:** They were huge bales, in any case, being taken up to Hay Bluff to restore a very important SSSI that had been damaged by wildfire. I think that you can go to every local authority area in Wales and find something good and useful happening.

[140] **Jane Davidson:** We have put extra money in this year. We put an extra £60,000 into our ecosystem small grants because we were very keen to try to find a bit of extra investment in taking this forward.

[141] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr wyf yn ddiolchgar am y wybodaeth honno oherwydd yr ydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth gan yr Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol a mudiadau eraill eu bod yn pryderu bod diffygion o ran y cyllid. Yr oedd llawer iawn o'r prosiectau hyn yn cael eu hariannu drwy Tir Gofal. Nid oes cytundebau newydd wedi'u cyflwyno yn y fan honno ers rhai blynyddoedd, ac mae pryder bod diffygion sylweddol o ran y gyllideb yn y cytundebau adran 15, y cyfeiriodd Mr Quarrell atynt. A gredwch y bydd y £60,000, er nad yw'n swm enfawr o arian, yn gwneud iawn am y diffygion **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I am grateful for that information because we have received evidence from the National Trust and other organisations that they are concerned that there may be a lack of funding. Many of those projects were being funded through Tir Gofal. No new agreements have been introduced for some years, and there is concern that there might be significant shortfalls in the budget for the section 15 agreements that Mr Quarrell referred to. Do you think that the £60,000, although not a huge amount of money, will make up for those shortfalls?

hynny?

[142] **Jane Davidson:** It was additional money that went in over and above the money that was already there for the section 15 agreements. I suppose that the difficulty is that, when we only have 40 per cent of the uplands in favourable condition, how much can be remedied with additional funding and how much cannot be remedied because of other issues?

[143] That is part of what is being tested through the substantial research on taking forward the biodiversity action plan. As Gerry says, 60 per cent of those are under management agreements, whether that is through Tir Gofal, section 15, or work that is being undertaken in local authorities. My agenda generally relates to how we can use every resource available to move according to the same agenda, particularly in the public sector, because the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 lays a duty on all public bodies in respect of their responsibilities. We have focused hard on local authorities in the last year to make sure that they fully exercise their responsibilities under NERC legislation. We are doing a bit of a stock-take this year as to how money has been used most effectively. We all know that the reality is that we will not be able to add to the money, but we want to make sure that, where the money is spent, we get the best outcomes with regard to returning sites to favourable status. That is important in the ecosystems services approach.

[144] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr ydym yn derbyn bod gwasgfa ariannol a'i bod yn anodd i bob Gweinidog ddod o hyd i arian ar hyn o bryd. Fodd bynnag, yr wyf yn falch eich bod yn gwneud asesiad ar hyn o bryd ac yn ceisio gweithio gydag adrannau eraill.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: We accept that there is a financial crisis and that it is hard for all Ministers to find money at the moment. However, I am glad that you have done that assessment and that you are trying to work with other departments.

[145] Symudwn at ynni adnewyddadwy. Mae'r cwestiwn nesaf gan Mick Bates.

We will now move to renewable energy. Mick Bates has the next question.

[146] **Mick Bates:** There are some issues that surround the development of renewable energy in the uplands that I would like to examine. There is a scheme in Glastir and there is the community renewable energy programme. Are you co-ordinating the schemes to ensure that they have maximum impact?

[147] **Jane Davidson:** Those are not the only ones, of course. As the uplands cover a large part of Wales, there will be other opportunities for community energy schemes through strategic regeneration. There will be individual community energy opportunities through the feed-in tariffs that are coming in this year and the renewable heat incentive that will come in next year. So, it is not so much about whether we are just co-ordinating those two areas. The community-scale renewable energy generation project is being delivered through a wide range of partners, as you know, for example Severn Wye Energy Agency, Ecodyfi, and the Awel Aman Tawe Egni (Energy) Project. Up to 22 specific large projects will be delivered across Wales, which will involve liaising with other agencies that are active in that development.

[148] This morning I announced new Department of Energy and Climate Change funding for the Cwm Arian area in north-east Pembrokeshire, and for two water turbines in Cwm Clydach in the Rhondda valley. In Cwm Arian there is a wind project for adjacent villages, and the Awel Aman Tawe Egni (Energy) Project will serve 12 villages. We announced two weeks ago the funding that will go to Llammas in Pembrokeshire towards proposals for low-impact developments with renewable energy and sustainable agricultural practices. So, all these things are coming together in a very exciting way.

[149] Links are being made in respect of the proposals for Glastir, but they are at an earlier

stage of development, because the other developments are coming on-stream at the moment. There are strong links between our departments in relation to the development of the on-farm approach.

[150] **Mick Bates:** One reason for asking that question is the fact that problems already exist in respect of transmission in remote rural areas. In relation to the schemes that you have mentioned, has it been assessed whether there is the capacity in remote and rural areas, where, generally there are 11 kV lines? You only need three 5 MW generators for the whole line to be overloaded. Have you looked at the potential impact on the transmission in these remote areas?

2.30 p.m.

[151] **Jane Davidson:** I have meetings with National Grid plc, and I will want to ensure that we have a good picture of what is likely to come through from the proposals, in order to make sure that the reassurance that it was able to give me last year that there are no major problems with small connections can still be given. It is important that we are given that reassurance all the way through the process, or people will not be able to benefit from the community energy approaches. So, we are keeping a tight ring around that. Although a number of agencies are involved in delivering it, the community scale renewable energy generation project is one project with many arms so that we keep ensuring that we can have that kind of intelligence, which can be fed back into our dialogue with the Westminster Government as well.

[152] **Mick Bates:** In its evidence, the RSPB highlighted the success of the statement of environmental master planning principles scheme piloted in the Clocaenog forest strategic search area. The aim was to ensure that the maximum benefits were gained from these developments, for habitats and biodiversity. It suggested that that model should be extended to other strategic search areas. Do you have any plans to do that?

[153] **Jane Davidson:** We have a community benefits group, which is looking at these issues. The approach in Clocaenog is being considered by that group in developing guidance for the whole of Wales. The intention is for that guidance to be available by the summer. The RSPB is a member of that group.

[154] **Mick Bates:** Finally, on this point, when we took evidence from the Forestry Commission, it stated that no assessment had been made of the potential impact of the national forest estates wind farm programme on the carbon stored in the uplands. It stated that it believed that this was the role of the planning authorities. Are you confident, Minister, that local planning authorities, or the Infrastructure Planning Commission for developments over 50 MW, have sufficient guidance and resources to deal with the carbon issues effectively?

[155] **Jane Davidson:** It is probably important to say at the outset that the onus is on the developer to ensure that it puts the appropriate environmental impact assessment in the planning system. We would want it to be like that, because any evidence that came through from the Forestry Commission, for example, would still need to be properly tested by the developer and then by the planning system. The forest research arm of the Forestry Commission has published quite substantial amounts of detailed information on the role of woodland in carbon storage, and that is used by bodies such as windfarm developers during their assessment of the proposed developments. There are also pretty good soil maps, which the Forestry Commission provides to developers as part of their environmental impact assessment submissions. So, data are held by the Forestry Commission that can be used as part of the environmental impact assessments. However, in the planning system, the onus is absolutely on the developer to produce the environmental impact assessment, against which the democratic process assesses the value of the planning application.

[156] The Infrastructure Planning Commission is in its infancy at the moment. The aim is to have around 30 commissioners operating in the IPC and 80 to 100 staff. The UK Government has given a commitment that the function of the IPC and its operation will be looked at two years into the process to ensure that it is operating effectively.

[157] **Mick Bates:** I am pleased to hear that, Minister. I have one brief, final question. Will the IPC look at the cumulative impact of a potential loss of carbon when it examines developments over 50 MW?

[158] **Jane Davidson:** Cumulative impact is an important element of the planning system in any case. So, we would also keep a close eye on cumulative impact in relation to the environmental impact assessment.

[159] **Mick Bates:** When you say that you will be keeping a close eye on it, at what level do you decide that the cumulative impact is not acceptable?

[160] **Jane Davidson:** Havard, would you like to respond to that?

[161] **Dr Prosser:** Cumulative impact in respect of what?

[162] **Mick Bates:** Carbon in the uplands—in the peat bogs, really.

[163] **Dr Prosser:** Cumulative impact is more of an issue with regard to visual impact. For soil carbon, it would be done on a scheme basis. You have to do it on a site-by-site basis, and there are tools available to do that. You would then look at what that overall scheme did in relation to soil carbon—potential losses versus the benefits. I am not too sure that I understand exactly. Cumulative would mean adding the units one by one, but they do not accumulate in a way that is proportionally over and above the number of units.

[164] **Mick Bates:** Although you are aware of the cumulative impact, would every bit of the cumulative impact of carbon loss as a result of construction and so on be acceptable?

[165] **Dr Prosser:** No, you would estimate that. You would estimate the total soil carbon losses from the overall scheme, which includes everything within that scheme—borrow pits, tracks, and all the various bits. All that would be estimated. Particular studies have been carried out to look at that, because it is not just a Welsh issue, it is also a Scottish issue. Particular guidance has been developed by the Scottish Government and Scottish Natural Heritage, with academics in Aberdeen University, on conducting an overall assessment of a scheme in the context of soil carbon losses.

[166] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Could you provide us with a note on that particular issue? Perhaps that would be helpful, rather than pursuing it now. I want to move forward, because I know that the Minister has to leave at 2.45 p.m.. We move on to Brynle, with questions looking at the way forward and cross-departmental work.

[167] **Brynle Williams:** In your evidence you state that the Welsh Assembly Government seeks to strike a balance between the different claims on the uplands, yet several organisations have told the committee that there is currently no agreed vision for the future of the uplands in Wales. What is the Government's vision for the uplands and how has this been shared with stakeholders?

[168] **Jane Davidson:** I heard Elin answer this question earlier. We consider the uplands as an integrated part of Wales rather than in isolation. Our approach is about achieving a sustainable and profitable future for the Welsh land-based sector as a whole that maintains

and enhances ecosystem services. The statement giving our vision in the context of Wales is set out in the 'Farming, food & countryside' strategy.

[169] **Brynle Williams:** Finally, what processes are in place to ensure that there is collaboration and co-operation between Government departments on work completed in the uplands?

[170] **Jane Davidson:** If you look at the portfolio responsibilities in my department, regeneration has been added due to the housing element of the portfolio. You cannot look at issues around regeneration without also relating it to the economy and transport, for example. In the senior tier of the civil service management of the Assembly Government, there are now directors general, who have a wider responsibility than one Cabinet Minister. For example, there is a director general who has the responsibility for my department, Elin's department and Alun Ffred Jones's department, which links the agendas around sport, tourism, culture and heritage with agriculture, rural affairs and my responsibilities. We also have the cabinet sub-committee focused on issues around sustainable futures, in which that subject is explored through Ministers, including the Minister for education. We have a number of links with local government on a whole range of issues, particularly in relation to flooding, waste, housing, regeneration and other issues, so there is a range of mechanisms by which we have links across Government. Also, ultimately, there is the Cabinet. Any major policy of the Assembly Government not only has to go through a policy gateway approach, where it is tested by officials, but also through the Cabinet, so that it is agreed Assembly Government policy. The policy is, therefore, enacted in all departments where it is appropriate.

2.40 p.m.

[171] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch Gweinidog, a diolch i chi, Mr Quarrell a Dr Prosser, am eich cyfraniadau, sydd wedi bod yn werthfawr iawn i'n hymchwiliad. Yr ydym hefyd yn ddiolchgar eich bod wedi cynnig rhoi rhagor o wybodaeth i ni, ar ffurf nodyn, ynghylch rhai o'r materion technegol a godwyd yn ystod y sesiwn dystiolaeth.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr Quarrell and Dr Prosser, for your contributions, which have been very valuable to our inquiry. I am also grateful that you have offered to submit additional information, in the form of a written note, on some of the technical matters that arose in the evidence session.

2.41 p.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[172] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Cynigiaf fod **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I move that

y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37(vi).

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37(vi).

[173] Gwelaf fod y pwyllgor yn gytûn.

I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 2.41 p.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 2.41 p.m.*