

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:

Your Ref/Eich Cyf:

Date/Dyddiad:

Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:

Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol: 02920468625

Email/Ebost:

10th June 2010

Craig Mitchell

craig.mitchell@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

By e-mail

Dear Mike,

Sustainability Committee inquiry into the Environment Strategy Action Plan

The committee posed a key question to all the participants at the evidence session on the 12th May as to whether the Environment Strategy was fit for purpose. This is a very broad question and in those broad terms it is clear that the Strategy is.

Local Authorities welcome the focus that the Strategy brings to these issues allowing a far more informed and joined up debate as a consequence.

There are caveats which were highlighted in the WLGA written submission such as further work needed on developing roles and responsibilities, performance data and establishing a clearer role for the Strategy amongst the broad policy framework.

It is also clear that thinking is evolving and emerging on these issues and the Strategy must seek to more fully embrace the ecosystem approach and integrate this into mainstream government thinking. The work on the Natural Environment Framework should help facilitate this alongside a broader understanding of what having sustainability as the central organising principle means in practice.

The Committee wished to understand why a number of authorities had declined the offer of grant aided work on green space assessments. The issues raised by those authorities fell into a number of points;

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

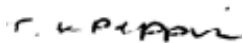
Welsh Local Government
Association
Local Government House
Drake Walk
CARDIFF CF10 4LG
Tel: 029 2046 8600
Fax: 029 2046 8601

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth
Leol Cymru
Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol
Rhodfa Drake
CAERDYDD CF10 4LG
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600
Ffacs: 029 2046 8601

www.wlga.gov.uk

- Some authorities felt they only found out about the grant at a late stage and since CCW were unable to extend the offer period they were unable to pursue within the timescale.
- Some were at that time still working on the UDP rather than gathering evidence for the LDP so other aspects of work were a higher priority to ensure delivery of UDP within statutory timescales. Within finite resource this is an understandable response given that we are also in a period of unprecedented reduction in planning fee income.
- Match-funding would have had to be secured; CCW were offering 50% grant up to a max of £8k per authority and although this could have been matched with staff time for those undertaking UDP's this was not feasible.
- In one case the LA had undertaken sufficient work to provide evidence for its LDP by the point at which the offer of grant was received. It is true that the green space assessment would have taken this a stage further but it was decided that the Council had insufficient manpower to undertake this particular exercise - especially as there are on-going responsibilities to maintain the system in subsequent years.
- In one case the representations that were received from the public related more to the provision of recreation space (also formally advised by TAN 16) not green space, and with the need to drive forward with the LDP the authority concentrated on recreational space assessment. Access to natural green space was perceived as being strong in this particular area given beaches, open access, and National Park, etc so this work could not be prioritised above other key areas with limited resources.

Yours sincerely



Dr Tim Peppin
Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development