



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-941  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00673/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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01 April 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 12 March, regarding Petition P-05-941 Biodiversity Remit for Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

Welsh Government recognises the escalating nature emergency, and reversing the decline in biodiversity is one of our top priorities. Key to meeting our objectives is the legislation I outlined in my previous correspondence (LG/000072/20) which will bring biodiversity into the heart of decision making in public life. This letter also set out how legislation applies with regard to NRW's remit and biodiversity.

NRW are already subject to a statutory duty to maintain biodiversity. Under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act, the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty requires public authorities, including NRW, to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. To fulfil their duty, action for biodiversity is embedded in NRW's statutory requirements for the sustainable management of natural resources. NRW have integrated their plan for compliance with the Section 6 duty into their organisational plans, with the high level commitments in the [Corporate Plan to 2022](#) and will report on compliance in their published annual reports.

The 2018-19 report is available [here](#); page 11 refers specifically to the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, and reporting on well-being objective 3 from p25 onwards sets out work being carried out for biodiversity.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

This work helps to deliver the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, restoring resilient ecological networks across Wales. These are networks of habitat in good ecological condition linking protected sites and other biodiversity hotspots across the wider landscape, and providing maximum benefit for biodiversity and well-being. Our [Natura 2000 sites](#) are core to resilient ecological networks. Action such as the SSSI Baseline Evaluation project will enable the delivery of the future Protected Sites Terrestrial Monitoring Programme and provide operational information to inform site management.

Integrating biodiversity into how we set our budgets was a crucial part of this last year resulting in the announcements of additional money for biodiversity in the Welsh Government's 'A Budget to build a more prosperous, more equal and greener Wales' published in December. The budget provides additional funding for biodiversity projects including:

- £15m for improvements to our Natura 2000 sites
- £4.5m for the National forest
- £1.145m for the Peatland Restoration programme
- £0.5m for a Biodiversity Taskforce to pilot approaches to capacity and capability building for systemic change.

NRW will be a major delivery partner in these projects and will also be working with Welsh Government to develop an Environmental Growth Plan by autumn 2020.

I am currently in discussions with NRW regarding their 2020-21 Remit Letter which will be issued in due course and made publically available. This letter will set out Welsh Government's expectations for their role in delivering for biodiversity, over and above their core delivery.

I understand you have also written to NRW who will respond to the operational issues raised in the petitioners' letter.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig  
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs