

**Public Accounts Committee**

**Inquiry into the Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales**

**Email received from Mr Ron Slater (9 December 2015)**

Dear Sirs

As a former WDA/Welsh Government employee, I have watched with interest the webcam broadcasts of all of the hearings in relation to the RIFW project.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I was employed in senior positions in WDA and, subsequently, in Welsh Government, prior to my retirement in June 2012.

I would refute the contentions [REDACTED] that minutes of meetings and file notes were not taken by former WDA employees either before or after the Agency was absorbed into Welsh Government. [REDACTED]. The misinformation given to the Committee was then further compounded by statements to the effect that the reason that senior ex-WDA staff left Welsh Government because they found it difficult to adapt to the civil service approach to producing minutes/file notes etc.

This is utter nonsense!

The reason that many senior former WDA staff left Welsh Government between 2006 and 2012 was as follows :-

Many of the extant (Senior) Civil Servants as at 2006 were and (I am told) continue to be extremely suspicious of staff with any specialism particularly in eg property management and development, engineering, planning etc. The approach from 2006 was to homogenise WDA staff into a generalised "jack of all trades" type of employee.....with the added approach of "if you don't make any decisions, you don't make any mistakes".

Many very experienced former WDA staff were "encouraged" to depart by a

mixture of successive staff restructurings and reviews (4 in 6 years in my particular department's case) leading to the disappearance of key posts in departmental structures.....partly mollified by voluntary redundancy packages.

This also had the effect of seeing the promotion of "on message" former WDA staff with no, or considerable less experience than that of their departed predecessors.

On the specific matter of the "lost" email to WEFO, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. **WEFO is a department of Welsh Government, and is required by the EU to retain all correspondence for a minimum period of 7 years.**

My experience in dealing with WEFO over many years was that WEFO was meticulous in its record keeping, bearing in mind the EU Auditors could (and did) descend at any time to review correspondence, application data etc. with severe financial consequences if any paperwork was not in order or was missing.

For the email to be lost by the sender is "unfortunate" but to also have been "lost" by the recipients WEFO sounds a little more suspicious.

In conclusion, it appears that a great deal of thought has been given [REDACTED] to have suddenly come up with the RIFW difficulties having been created by the former WDA and its staff, a situation which the interviewees presumably have assumed would close off that particular line of questioning as it would not be disputed or checked.

I beg to so dispute.

Yours sincerely

Ron Slater FRICS