

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00973/15

William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

30 June 2015

Dear Bill,

I refer to correspondence dated 8 May from the Woodland Trust/Coed Cadw to the Petitions Committee regarding petition number P-03-537.

I note the Petitioner's point that planting trees and hedgerows contributes to alleviating the effects of flooding and planting schemes in appropriate locations can make a contribution to flood risk management. The Welsh Government has introduced Glastir Restoration, Woodland Creation and Woodland Management in order to increase woodland planting in Wales as a contribution towards its woodland creation aspirations and I note their comment that Glastir alone cannot achieve our objectives in this area. However during the development of Glastir, the Welsh Government consulted widely and took on board input from stakeholders which we believe has been incorporated into the scheme wherever possible, including from the Woodland Trust. It is important to note that Glastir applications must comply with the UK Forestry Standard which takes into account the Floods Directive which is designed to help EU Member States prevent and limit floods and mitigate against their damaging effects on human health, the environment, infrastructure and property.

In Wales there has been an increasing amount of interest and support for the use of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) approach to manage surface water. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) chairs a SuDS Working Group that aims to share good practice and increase the use of SuDS solutions. The Group includes representatives from the Welsh Local Government Association, water and sewerage undertakers, local authorities and developers. Ongoing work by NRW in the Clwyd and Elwy catchments has shown that different solutions are more effective in the different catchments and in these areas various different methods of natural flood risk management have been used within one catchment.

The Welsh Government recognises that our sewerage and drainage infrastructures will be increasingly under pressure from climate change effects and a growing population. We support the SuDS approach as a sustainable and collaborative method for reducing the impacts of these pressures and we will be publishing non-statutory SuDS Standards later in the year.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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We have been able to provide support to one of the schemes in the Rainscape project in Llanelli by contributing over £600,000 of funding from the European Regional Development Fund. Rainscape provides new, innovative solutions to managing the amount of surface water entering our sewers.

I am also aware of Greener Grangetown which is a partnership involving Cardiff City Council, Dwr Cymru and NRW. Other local authorities may wish to follow its progress and may even consider adopting its framework as a possible exemplar of flood management practice. I would therefore suggest that the Petitioner contacts other Welsh local authorities to raise awareness of it in order that they can consider such an initiative as part of their urban planning proposals and designs.

Getting officers out on the ground is a good means of advocating woodland creation and better management of existing woods and we will consider supporting this proposal during the core grant funding decision process.

We also fully support and wish to encourage projects that have a joined-up approach (such as the Pontbren project). By working in partnership, land owners and managers can maximise the potential of their land by creating new woodlands for their multiple benefits – wildlife habitats, improved business opportunities, renewable energy sources and of course, where appropriate, a means of reducing water run-off during heavy rain and flooding.

The Welsh Government continues to work with its stakeholders and the forestry sector to encourage proposals for new and innovative ways to increase woodland creation and it continues to be a priority in our Woodlands for Wales forestry strategy.

The response to Glastir Woodland Creation to date has been very positive and the Expressions of Interest applications support this. I am confident that given its ethos as a cross-cutting agri-environment and forestry scheme, the Glastir tree planting options such as strategic planting against water run-off, the creation of riparian strips and new hedgerow planting can make a contribution to flood prevention.

In summary therefore, there is not a single solution that can be applied in all cases, certain proposals such as tree planting, may not always be the most effective choice or provide the greatest benefit when compared to other flood risk management methods. Proposals must always therefore be considered in what is best for the location and what the most sustainable means of achieving them are.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Sargeant', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
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Minister for Natural Resources