

Carl Sargeant AM
Minister for Natural Resources
Welsh Government

22 May 2015

Dear Minister

Appointments process for the Chair of Natural Resources Wales

We have recently been made aware of the ongoing appointments process for a new Chair of Natural Resources Wales.

You will be aware that similar positions at a UK-level are subject to a pre-confirmation hearing in Parliament. For example, the Chair of Natural England and the Chair of the Environment Agency are both posts subject to this procedure.

Additionally, the National Assembly for Wales has held such hearings prior to the appointment of the Public Services Ombudsman and the Auditor General for Wales.

I therefore ask that the Environment and Sustainability Committee has the opportunity to hold a hearing with the preferred candidate prior to you making their appointment.

Building in this additional step to the process would offer public reassurance over the eventual appointment; enhance the appointee's legitimacy; and provide evidence of the candidate's independence of mind. It also falls within our duty to consider ministerial decision making as part of the scrutiny process.

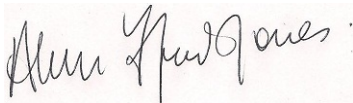
As with the procedure in Parliament, we would report on the hearing with our view on the suitability of the candidate. This would not be binding on you, but we would expect you to take the report into account before making the appointment.



I apologise for contacting you late in the appointment process. Unfortunately, I was not notified by you or your officials that this process had started and I have only recently been made aware of the timescales involved.

For future significant public appointments, I would ask that you notify the relevant Assembly committee in writing with details of the process to be followed and the timescale for the appointment prior to the process commencing. I would also ask that you consider issuing a written statement to the National Assembly for Wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light pink rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Alun Ffred Jones'.

Alun Ffred Jones AM

Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

