

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-941
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00072/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

15 January 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 8 January, regarding Petition P-05-941 Biodiversity Remit for NRW.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts into legislation international best practice for reversing the decline in biodiversity through the 'sustainable management of natural resources' (SMNR).

This involves taking action for biodiversity across the whole landscape, building on the protected site network, through the ecosystem approach.

The definition of natural resources includes (but not limited to) animals, plants and other organisms; air, water and soil; minerals; geological features and processes; physiographical features; climatic features and processes.

The Act puts in place the following delivery requirements for Natural Resources Wales (NRW):

- NRW must pursue the sustainable management of natural resources in the exercise of its functions, the objective of which is to maintain and enhance ecosystem resilience.
- Welsh Ministers' Natural Resources Policy sets out the priorities for the sustainable management of natural resources every 5 years for everyone to take action. NRW must deliver the policy locally through Area Statements, which will be published in March 2020.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

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.

The Environment Act introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, the section 6 duty, for public authorities in the exercise of function in relation to Wales.

As biodiversity underpins the resilience of ecosystems, biodiversity is central to NRW's core purpose of pursuing sustainable management of natural resources, and is embedded into their statutory requirements.

Please see my initial response to the points in the petition:

NRW will ensure that biodiversity is central to its core purpose of pursuing sustainable management of natural resources by:

- 1. Working towards an overall improvement in the status of Welsh wildlife and preventing or at least minimising the risk of any further extinctions as a consequence of human activities.*
 - The approach and delivery framework in the Environment Act is about reversing the decline in biodiversity through international best practice to achieve this aim.
- 2. Establishing sustainable, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, this should initially focus on the consolidation and extensions to existing National Nature Reserves and other protected areas, followed by the establishment of new areas.*
- 3. Prioritising the need to obtain favourable or recovering status for conservation features on all statutory nature conservation sites (SPAs, SACs, SSSIs and NNRs).*
 - Both 2 and 3 are being taken forward through the SMNR delivery framework. The Natural Resources Policy sets out 'resilient ecological networks' as a priority for reversing the decline in biodiversity. This is being taken forward through Area Statements and the Nature Recovery Action Plan.
- 4. Developing and improving an effective network of Marine Protected Areas which are sufficient to ensure the adequate protection of marine life and sustainable fisheries around Wales.*
 - The Natural Resources Policy, land use planning and marine planning will complement each other in supporting sustainable management of natural resources across the land sea interface (applying the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)).
 - The management of the Welsh Marine Protected Area (MPA) network is directly supported by the 2018-2023 MPA Network Management Framework and accompanying annual Action Plans. Collectively they provide a clear steer for Management Authorities to guide delivery of the long-term vision for the Welsh MPA network. They focus efforts on those actions that will improve or maintain the condition of MPAs, thus improving the contribution the network makes to the overall health, resilience and functioning of Welsh seas. Furthermore, a range of regulatory processes, consenting decisions and assessment processes, for example, marine licensing and Habitat Regulation Assessments, proactively consider and provide upfront protection to MPAs.

5. Ensure that more people are actively engaged with biodiversity issues, and aware of the significance of biodiversity to their health and wellbeing.

- Natural Resources Wales' area statements implement the Natural Resources Policy locally through public service delivery and place based approaches. They will be published in March 2020. Ensuring that people are more actively engaged with biodiversity and aware of the significance to their health and well-being is at the heart of the approach.

I would also refer you to [Vital Nature](#), NRW's Strategic Steer for Biodiversity to 2022. It establishes a high-level framework for actions for biodiversity in line with the Nature Recovery Action Plan. Through a series of goals and high-level commitments it shows how, working with others, NRW will deliver the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duties, and do more to connect people with nature.

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