

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MB/DFM/0489/09

Mick Bates AM
Chair of the Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

04 June 2009

Dear Mick,

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF 10 JUNE 2009

You wrote to me on 29 April and 7 May to inviting me to appear before the Sustainability Committee to give further evidence to the Committee on the actions undertaken within my portfolio to mainstream sustainable development.

I submitted a paper for the 2nd April 2009 meeting (copy attached) which my officials attended. In this letter, I am responding to the specific points you have raised subsequent to this.

1. The Sustainable Development Integration Tool

The Committee expressed interest in our SD Integration Tool. I attach a copy of the draft document which is being finalised. Because this is work in progress, it is available in English only.

2. Evidence of Achievements

The committee expressed concern about achievements to date. I would offer the following examples of our achievements in support to business and regeneration:

1. Sustainable Buildings: my department is at the forefront of delivering Welsh Assembly Government policy on sustainable buildings. As a consequence, there is a growing list of projects that have either had grant support or built on land sold by Welsh Assembly Government which are achieving BREEAM excellent.
2. Carbon Pathfinder Programme: My department has established a Carbon Pathfinder Group to identify major new projects that we are progressing, both ourselves and in partnership with others, where there is an early opportunity to make progress in delivering zero carbon development.

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3. Valleys Partnership: This programme will make a positive contribution to key areas of planning and delivery of environment, heritage and tourism services across the South Wales Valleys. It will also contribute to agendas such as health, education and crime reduction.
4. Flexible Support for Business: My Department worked with Department for Environment Sustainability and Housing to devise a solution that will mainstream environment and sustainability issues into our new business support mechanisms.

3. Allocation of Resources for Transport projects including a Rail route to Cardiff Airport

The National Transport Plan is currently under development. The plan will set out our priorities and plans for transport over the next five years and place a greater emphasis on moving towards more sustainable modes of transport. In announcing the forward rail programme, the numbers allocated to schemes were intended to identify where they were on the map of Wales and not to prioritise the schemes in anyway. In respect of the schemes listed in the announcement, they were allocated into four categories and the frequency enhancements for the Vale of Glamorgan line were in the high-ranking category, subject to feasibility and business case development where appropriate.

4. Monitoring and Brechmarking the reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions post 2011

The Committee asked for more information on how greenhouse gas emissions will be monitored post 2011. We are working with colleagues in Department for Environment Sustainability and Housing and others to develop Carbon-footprinting assessment tools. This is a complex area as climate change impacts are often indirect and hard to measure. However, Flexible Support for Business (FS4B) will have a tool to measure emission savings from our resource efficiencies and environmental management interventions.

A cross-Departmental work-stream has been established following a recommendation by the Climate Change Commission. The work-stream is in the process of developing baselines and assessment tools, which will be linked to DE&T's policies.

5. Linking policies in DE&T portfolio to the sustainable Development Scheme

My officials are working with colleagues in Department for Environment Sustainability and Housing and others to ensure that our policies meet the requirement of the Sustainable Development scheme. We will be adapting our Sustainable Development Integration tool to more closely reflect the new SD scheme.

We have produced detailed Biodiversity Guidance for the Department, which promotes positive biodiversity action in response to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Biodiversity Duty. My Department is developing a strong team of SD Advocates and a supporting Technical team with a clear role to deliver SD and environmental advice both to inform and influence policy, strategy and delivery.

6. What percentage of policies received a fair or good rating with regards to 'a sustainable environment' when assessed through the Policy Gateway integration Tool?

Two policies have been through the Policy Gateway Integration Tool. The Green Jobs Strategy consultation scored 'good' and the Transport Strategy which went though the earlier policy gateway scored 'fair'.

I trust that the above answers your queries and I look forward to expanding on this or answering any additional points when I attend the Committee on 10 June.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan'.

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport