

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-970
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/01850/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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Dear Janet Finch-Saunders

11th August 2020

Thank you for your letter of 21 July, regarding Petition P-05-970: Ask the Senedd to reconsider their decision not to support Zoos & Aquariums with emergency funding.

You will appreciate I cannot comment on individual cases, I am aware the Welsh Mountain Zoo in particular has received very generous funding from the Welsh Government. The petitioner has referenced those figures which have been made public by the zoo itself.

With regard to how the funding available for Welsh zoos and aquaria is being kept under review, this has and will continue to take many forms. My officials have continued to liaise with colleagues who are managing the Covid-19 response funds. For example, the second phase of the £500 million Economic Resilience Fund (ERF), which I referenced in my previous letter, has now launched and is available to many zoos which did not apply for funding from the first tranche. Further, those with charitable status can apply to the Third Sector Resilience Fund.

I am also aware many animal attractions have benefitted from funding from the Development Bank of Wales, which was set up by the Welsh Government. I am reassured, to date, most zoos and aquaria in Wales have had the opportunity to access generous short-term funding to counter the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown and my officials will continue to liaise with those managing these funds to ensure this remains the case.

Additionally, my officials have worked closely with their counterparts in the Governments of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland via regular policy meetings and through the Zoo Expert Committee, which has been providing advice throughout the pandemic. They have also liaised with the British and Irish Association for Zoos and Aquaria (BIAZA), which has three member zoos in Wales.

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You may have seen, since my last letter, Defra announced its Zoo Fund was being increased from £14 million to £100 million, of which the Welsh Government are eligible for approximate Barnett Formula consequentials of £5.1 million. Although we are unable to ring-fence funds received into the Covid-19 relief fund, many of our Zoos have benefited generously to date from funding through our ERF. These short term funds have supported Zoos until they were able to re-open. We are keen to ensure Zoos have the opportunity to recoup some of the lost income through the remaining summer months, however, we will continue to engage with Zoos to ensure they are able to continue to meet animal welfare standards.

Regards



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