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Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00987/22

Llyr Gruffydd MS
Chair,
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

25 May 2022

Dear Llyr,

Thank you for your letter, of 21 April, concerning our work on biodiversity, environmental governance, and the Natural Resources Policy.

I am very happy to assist the work of the Committee and please find my responses to your questions below:

1. Can you clarify whether and how the Welsh Government will be represented at COP15?

We await confirmation of the details of the second part of COP15 later this year. As such, plans for the Welsh Government's representation at the conference are still under development. The way in which Welsh Government is represented will be dependent on the Covid-19 situation in Kunming, China at the time. I hope to update the Committee once plans have been finalised.

2. Can you outline the Welsh Government's ambitions for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and how it is seeking to influence the outcome of COP15?

Welsh Government supports the framework aims to galvanise urgent and transformative action by Governments and all of society - including indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society, and businesses - to achieve the outcomes it sets out in its vision, mission, goals and targets. We will actively contribute to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), its protocols, and other biodiversity related multilateral agreements, processes and instruments.

We have put forward Wales' position strongly to Defra in relation to the latest draft of the 2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) to inform the development of a UK position. This will inform discussions at the fourth meeting of the Working Group, being held in Nairobi on 21 - 26 June, where the aim is to agree a more finalised text ahead of adoption at part 2 of the COP 15 conference later this year.

Halting and reversing the decline of biodiversity by 2030 will require cooperation at all levels. Biodiversity loss is driven by local, subnational, national, and global factors, so

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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.

responses are also needed at all scales and across all sectors. We are committed to restoring biodiversity for species and habitats in both terrestrial and marine environments.

That is why the focus of the Deep Dive on biodiversity is to guide the programme of work which ensures we meet Target 3 (the '30 by 30' target), as well as other targets outlined in the Global Biodiversity Framework. We want to actively demonstrate that Wales is a globally responsible nation which is prepared to rise to the challenge of the joint nature and climate crises.

3. Can you provide us with an update on progress towards the Deep Dive, including membership of the group who will be taking this work forward?

The first meeting of the Deep Dive was held on 12 May and I am enclosing the Terms of Reference and the Membership of the Core Group as part of this response. We plan to conclude the Deep Dive towards the end of June.

4. You told us officials “have been working with other UK counterparts through the Four Countries Biodiversity Group and JNCC to develop a common set of principles”. Can you provide further details of this work, including the purpose of the common set of principles, and whether and how they will be used to inform statutory biodiversity targets and shape future policy?

Officials work with other UK counterparts through the Four Countries Biodiversity Group and JNCC on areas of shared ambition or common purpose for biodiversity at a UK level; to meet a new transformative agenda; to bend the curve of biodiversity loss; and enable joint working on areas benefiting from cross UK action. These principles are intended to support intergovernmental cooperation and are consistent with, but cannot be a replacement for, the responsibilities and commitments of Welsh Government in devolved policy areas. Work is still underway on the principles and I will share these with the Committee as soon as is practicably possible.

5. We note you have produced guidance on the environmental principles to ensure they are incorporated into policy and decision making across Welsh Government. Can you clarify whether the guidance is publicly available?

The guidance is not currently in the public domain. It is intended for use by internal policy-makers and operational roll-out & training on the guidance is still in progress.

6. Can you provide an indicative timeline for the consultation on proposals for permanent environmental governance arrangements?

Welsh Government remains committed to the establishment of permanent environmental governance measures. A permanent environmental governance body will require primary legislation. An announcement on future years of the legislative programme will be made by the First Minister in due course.

7. Can you provide an update on progress towards reviewing the NRP, including an indicative timeline you are working towards for the publication of a revised NRP?

Our Natural Resources Policy (NRP) sets the priorities for nature-based solutions, renewable energy & resource efficiency and taking a place-based approach. These priorities are still relevant in addressing the biodiversity and climate emergencies. I will however be using the biodiversity deep dive and the recommendations resulting from this to inform the timescale for reviewing the policy.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AS/MS
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Minister for Climate Change

Biodiversity Deep Dive – Terms of Reference

Purpose

To develop a set of collective actions we can take immediately to support meaningful delivery of the CBD ‘30 by 30’ goal, recognising the capabilities we have in Wales and reflecting our duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations and Environment Acts.

The ‘30 by 30’ target:

Ensure that at least 30 per cent globally of land areas and of sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.’

The deep dive will consider:

- How can the existing protected site network- land, sea and freshwater (SSSI, NNRs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites including National Parks and AONBs) better deliver 30 by 30?
- How can ‘Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures’ – ‘Exemplar Nature Recovery Areas be established and contribute to 30 by 30?
- How do we ensure that our protected sites are well connected and integrated into the wider land and seascapes?
- How do we address and reverse the key pressures and drivers of biodiversity loss?
- How do we deliver a programme of action over the next decade? What enablers are needed including resources, and how do we ensure progress is being made through effective monitoring and evaluation?
- Who are the key actors (public, private, voluntary and wider society) and how they all support and engage with delivery of the target?

Membership of the group

The deep dive will involve a small core group of critical thinkers led by the Minister for Climate Change with secretariat provided by Welsh Government. Members have been chosen based on their individual expertise and experience and as such, attendance is not to be delegated without agreement of Welsh Government officials.

Name	Organisation
Ceri Davies	Natural Resources Wales
Sharon Thompson	RSPB Cymru
Richard Unsworth	Project Seagrass and Swansea University
Paul Sinnadurai	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Tim Pagella	Bangor University
Philippa Pearson	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

Steve Ormerod	Cardiff University – Ecology
Richard Cowell	Cardiff University – Geography and Planning
Katie Medcalf	Environment Systems
Hilary Kehoe	Nature Friendly Farming Network
Mike Elliott	University of Hull - Estuarine and Coastal Science

Additionally, there will be separate focussed meetings covering topics where specific expertise is needed, for example on the marine environment. The outputs from these meetings will feed into the deep dive group, to support them with a broader range of opinions.

Ways of Working

These will be aligned to the Five Ways of Working outlined within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

- Work collaboratively across organisations, and with other stakeholders and roundtable sub-groups;
- In proposing future actions and solutions, take account of relevant evidence and/or identify any key evidence gaps in respect of uncertainties;
- Seek to achieve integrated long-term solutions and take account of the short, medium and long-term consequences of actions; and
- Work with integrity and respectfully challenge each other to consider how we can do things differently/better.
- All outputs and recommendations from this group should be justified by reference to a sound evidence base or draw attention to the limitations of the evidence where this not available.

Timing

The exercise will begin on **12 May 2022**, with meetings taking place at regular intervals until the end of June 2022. The outcomes of the review will be announced in a Ministerial Statement ahead of summer recess.

The group may meet occasionally following this statement if actions are identified which require longer-term work.

Communications

Discussions in the group will take place on a confidential basis and there will be no communications about the outcome of discussions unless first agreed with Welsh Government. Meeting papers are to be treated as Official Sensitive unless stated otherwise and will be normally issued one week in advance of each meeting.

Welsh Government may publish these Terms of Reference at any point. A Written Statement will be published at the conclusion of the deep dive. Notes of each meeting will be circulated to the group but not formally published. Transcripts of each

of the deep dive meetings will be taken for the purposes of compiling meeting notes but will be destroyed shortly afterwards.