

The People's Assembly for Nature

25 August 2023

People's Plan for Nature

Thank you for your letter of 16 August, sent to me as Chair of the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and seeking a response to the People's Plan for Nature.

The Committee's role is to scrutinise the policies of the Welsh Government and hold it to account. In the course of that scrutiny work the Committee considers how Welsh Government's policies are taking account of the nature emergency declared by the Senedd on 30 June 2021, and achieving the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Recent examples of this include our legislative scrutiny of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill, now the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023, as it progressed through the Senedd. We considered how its sustainable land management (SLM) principles can secure economic resilience of Welsh farming communities, assist nature recovery and protect biodiversity. We engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including those organisations powering the People's Plan for Nature, and worked in close partnership with Members of the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee (CCEI).

Our recommendations on the general principles of the Bill can be found on our website. In particular Recommendation 7 invited the Minister to consider stakeholder views on changes to the wording of the Sustainable Land Management objectives, with Recommendation 8 asking the Minister to consider including nature recovery more explicitly in the wording of the Bill. Recommendation 12 sought clarity on there being no hierarchy between the objectives, and to tie them more closely to the wording of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Committee also sought more clarity on the Minister's intentions with National Minimum Standards and the regulatory baseline for the agricultural sector (Recommendation 4). The Welsh Government's response to the report set out its position on each of the recommendations.



The Committee also scrutinised the Food (Wales) Bill. The general principles of this Members' Bill were not agreed by the Senedd, but regardless of this, the Committee made strong recommendations to Welsh Government on its approach to national food policy and strategy. In particular Recommendation 2 called on the Welsh Government to improve its approach to the food system by ensuring policies are joined-up and complementary, and Recommendation 8 called for an internal food policy board or work with the Future Generations Commissioner to create a dedicated food-systems post to drive joined-up food policy in Wales. This is with the aspiration of delivering "affordable and healthy food that is economically, environmentally, culturally and socially sustainable for people now and in the future." The Welsh Government responded to the report recommendations in May 2023.

In our general scrutiny sessions with the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, we regularly raise questions about matters raised by the People's Plan for Nature including on food production and consumption, nature-friendly farming, fisheries and protection of waterways from agricultural pollution. We consider sustainable development in the round as part of our work, including in our annual budget scrutiny sessions, where again the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are front and centre.

Our regular engagement with stakeholders includes most recently a series of meetings at the Royal Welsh Show. Since it was established in 2021, the Committee has visited a number of farms, including one run by a member of the Nature Friendly Farming Network, and visited the Gelli Aur campus at Coleg Sir Gâr to view technological developments to minimise agricultural pollution.

The cross-party nature of the Committee's membership is one of its strengths, and is important for driving forward change. The cross-over with the remits of other Senedd Committees, such as the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, are also taken into account when planning the work programme, and our consultations are transparent and public as our work relies on a strong body of evidence.

Kind regards,



Paul Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English