

Peter Ryland
Chief Executive, Welsh European Funding Office

Hugh Morgan
Head of Rural Payments Division, Welsh Government

24 October 2023

Dear Peter and Hugh,

Maximising EU Funding

I write further to your appearance before Committee on 14 September 2023, to address questions on Audit Wales' report, Maximising EU Funding (June 2023). Thank you for your attendance.

As discussed, the Committee had further questions to ask you:

Replacement funding

Structural Fund Programme

- With the Shared Prosperity funding going direct to local government, what the Welsh Government is planning for national programmes such as work based learning, apprenticeships and employment support services that have previously attracted a lot of EU Structural Funds.

Rural Development Programme

- Given wider pressures on the Welsh Government's budget, what the prospects are for the replacement funding matching the levels provided by the Rural Development Programme, including the level of provision for socio-economic programmes.
- Whether the Welsh Government intends to publish a similar level of information on spending and performance on the replacement schemes as under the Rural Development Programme.

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

- How Welsh Government funding for a Rural Economic and Sustainability Programme (across 2022-23 to 2024-25) has been allocated and spent to date, including whether the allocation for 2022-23 was fully spent.
- When the Welsh Government expects to open applications for the interim agri-environment scheme (replacing Glastir) and whether there will be similar funding available as previous years.

Other matters

You agreed to write to the Committee on the following matters:

- How many active projects have passed their due end date within the structural funds programme?
- You committed to providing further details on your proposals for the modification of the Rural Development Programme (see paragraph 176 of the transcript).
- You agreed to provide an update in writing on the domestic rural spend of £27.3 million in 2022-23 (see paragraph 149 of the transcript).
- You also agreed you would confirm the amount of total value of RDP funding “netted-off” by the UK Government, as a result of slow spend (see paragraph 140 of the transcript).
- Whether the Welsh Government has seen any further reduction in the number of administrative mistakes relating to the interpretation of Rural Development Programme scheme rules since the position reflected in Audit Wales’ 2022 audit work. This relates to the financial audit work referred to in paragraph 38 of the Auditor General’s report.
- How the anticipated 30 September modification in the Rural Development Programme is progressing, what the modification will involve, and the reasons for it.

Thank you in advance for addressing these additional queries.

Please could you provide this information by 15 November 2023?

Yours sincerely,



Mark Isherwood MS
Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee