

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion  
Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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Paul Davies MS  
Chair  
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee  
Welsh Parliament

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1 July 2024

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June requesting further information on fisheries following the general ministerial scrutiny session on 13 June. I am happy to provide an answer to each of your questions:

**What are your priorities for the fisheries and aquaculture sector, and how will you achieve these?**

I am aware the former Rural Affairs Minister intended to set out a strategic approach for fisheries and aquaculture. I understand this was endorsed by the Ministerial Advisory Group for Welsh Fisheries, who I look forward to meeting with in due course. I intend to progress the commitment and will set out a statement in the autumn.

In the meantime, I expect our future direction to remain as previously set out, with the delivery of sustainable management at its core, and a focus on delivery of Fisheries Management Plans and adaptive management measures. All supported by science and evidence, and engagement with stakeholders.

We will continue to deliver in line with our statutory duties and seek opportunities and initiatives to support the industry to develop and grow. Our funding rounds through the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme will be designed to underpin all the priorities to help deliver the outcomes we all want to see. I am pleased to say we had a positive take up for Round 4 of the Scheme and are currently considering the applications.

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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.

**Do you anticipate the 22 joint Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) that are due to be published by the end of the year will be delivered?**

My officials are working with the other Fisheries Administrations, partner bodies and stakeholders to develop draft FMPs which will be subject to consultation. It has always been an ambitious programme of FMPs, set out in the Joint Fisheries Statement, not least because the publication of FMPs is just the beginning of the process and significant work and resource is required to implement the plans.

Discussions are underway with the other Fisheries Administrations about the publication timescales for the 22 joint plans, and the calling of the General Election will inevitably have an impact, but I can assure you they will be progressed as quickly as possible and delivery of them remains a priority across all Administrations.

**How are you ensuring Welsh interests are represented in final FMPs, in particular that the plans ensure the 'sustainable management of natural resources' as set out in the Environment (Wales) Act?**

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) will be key tools to deliver sustainable and well-managed fisheries, helping to meet the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) policy commitments and the Fisheries Objectives. A key focus is on the sustainable management of our resources, which is in line with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act. FMPs will set strategic direction and provide a 'road map' for the management of key stocks including the development of future management measures and the mitigation of environmental impacts.

As I noted above, all FMPs will be subject to consultation to ensure Welsh stakeholders have the opportunity to input, and their views are represented.

In addition, FMPs for Seabass and King Scallop were published in December 2023 and stakeholder advisory groups have been established to support implementation of the plans in Wales. There will also be FMPs for whelks, cockles, and crab and lobster in Wales during the period of this JFS. The Crab and Lobster FMP is due to be published in 2026. Working with partner organisations, in April a number of successful pre-consultation meetings were held across Wales in Bangor, New Quay and Milford Haven. Further pre-consultation meetings are due across the summer with Welsh interests.

Once again, thank you for writing to me on this important topic. I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

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