

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

Ein cyf/Our ref: HID/PO/127/24

Paul Davies MS
Chair
Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

9 May 2024

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your follow-up letter of 8 April on behalf of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee (ETRA committee) about the effectiveness and sustainability of the current approach to managing Internal Drainage Districts (IDDs), and for sharing the views of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Farming Union Wales' (FUW).

I recognise the concerns about the current role and operating model of Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and Internal Drainage Districts (IDDs) as these have also been raised with me directly.

There are, of course, broader fundamental questions for us to grapple with in considering how we adapt to the impacts of climate change and what that means not just for land drainage but flood risk management more widely. We are witnessing more frequent extreme weather events which will increase the risk of flooding to communities across Wales and the inundation of agricultural land.

I have been carefully considering my priorities for the portfolio since taking up my current role and I have been clear that any activity must lead to meaningful outcomes and reflect proper engagement with those with an interest. In terms of the review of the current operating model, this would not be a simple undertaking, because it would go to the heart of the numerous challenges we have in striking a balance in the role land plays in flood alleviation and in supporting agriculture and food production.

For this reason, I have concluded that it is not possible to resource the sort of review I believe is necessary at this time.

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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.

Whilst this may be disappointing to stakeholders, I do want to encourage an active dialogue about sustainable flood risk management solutions which can increase resilience for communities and landowners as we also continue to adapt to the threats posed by climate change. However, any consideration the ETRA committee could bring to this area may be helpful and informative. Such matters may indeed be of interest to the Climate Change committee too.

I have asked my officials to keep the position under review and I will update the Committee on this matter when I am in a position to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Huw Irranca-Davies'.

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