



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref SF/AD/0555/13

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM
Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

4 April 2013

Amry Dafydd,

SCRUTINY SESSION ON 21 FEBRUARY 2013

Thank you for your letter of 4 March following my appearance before your Committee session on 21 February.

I was disappointed to read your and the Committee's concerns about the information provided before and during the scrutiny session. My aim is always to disclose all the necessary facts openly and with the utmost transparency. I will set out below the information you have asked for, along with my assurance of my support for the work of the Committee in the future. I will address your concerns in turn.

Financial information provided to the Committee

I share the Committee's concerns, and assure you that my intention is to provide full and frank information to support the Committee's scrutiny role. There were discussions between my officials and the Clerk to the Committee in the run up to the February session about the level and detail of the information expected, and there appear to have been failures in communication on both sides. To avoid any possible repetition, I will expect an in depth meeting to take place between my officials and the Committee staff ahead of the next scrutiny session in the summer.

Information on the European Union decision on Glastir spend

The European Commission have now confirmed their position on spend in 2014 and 2015 for Glastir. All agreements in place by 31st December 2013 will be able to continue to be funded under the current Rural Development Plan (RDP) until 31st December 2015,

providing that they are amended to fit with new rules governing the next RDP. Any agreements signed after 31st December 2013 are currently expected to be funded from the successor RDP.

Transitional arrangements are still to be agreed, as are the regulations governing the successor plan. As yet it is too early to be able to identify the impact of CAP Reform on the existing agreements.

My officials are working with Defra, other UK administrations and the European Commission in order to identify the level of spend that will be realised under the current RDP and the effect of new rules as a result of CAP Reform. A full evaluation of RDP allocations is being carried out to ensure that Wales can gain maximum benefit from European funding under the current plan.

Marine Conservation Zones

Defra's Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) work remains at an early stage. The initial consultation concludes at the end of March. It is too early to determine whether or not Defra will actually seek to implement MCZs within the Welsh Zone or, if they do, the extent to which fishing would be affected within any MCZ. My officials have had preliminary discussions with Defra regarding the principle of enforcement and impacts of displacement fishing activity within the Welsh zone. Discussions will intensify when Defra's plans become clearer.

Transitional European Union measures on direct payments and RDP under CAP

The negotiations on the reform of the CAP are still in progress and it will not be possible to complete work on transitional arrangements until the new regulations are in a more complete state. Nevertheless, the Welsh Government has worked with other UK administrations and put forward our views of the elements that required to be addressed in the transition. In particular this includes clarity on the eligible dates for new commitments and payments under the RDP, funding arrangements for both Single Farm Payments and the RDP, and arrangements for modulation of funding between the EAGF and EAFRD funds.

Impact on Programme for Government targets of access to Glastir Advanced for current Tir Gofal farmers

Following the offer of transitional arrangements to Tir Gofal farmers in 2009, most agreement holders will exit that scheme at the same time. The Welsh Government is committed to targeting the new Glastir Advanced scheme on farms that offer the best potential for environmental delivery. Tir Gofal participants who have applied to enter Glastir will therefore compete on an equal platform to seek a Glastir Advanced contract. Of those existing Tir Gofal farms eligible for scoring under Glastir Advanced, nearly 800 were selected for inclusion in the Glastir Advanced scheme for 2014, and around 200 more placed on the reserve list. The remaining 2,000 Tir Gofal farms will continue to be considered for selection in Glastir Advanced for future years subject to them joining Glastir Entry and expressing an interest in the Advanced scheme. A further selection for Glastir

2015 will be made in the autumn and we envisage selecting a similar number, subject to provisions being available under new Rural Development Regulations.

The impact of the reduction of a high level agri-environment scheme on notified areas such as SSSI and SACs will be limited as the cross compliance requirements and the Whole Farm Code of Glastir Entry will provide protection of these habitats. Farmers not joining Glastir Advanced can maintain or enhance the environmental benefits made on their farms under Tir Gofal by choosing complementary options as part of their Glastir Entry application. The Glastir Advanced scoring system gives consideration to protected sites, contributing to the score and improving the chances of selection, thus prioritising these areas for selection into Glastir Advanced.

Delivery of the Committee's Glastir report recommendations

I am attaching, at Annexes A, B and C, a full response to each of the ten Recommendations along with details of the Glastir Drop-In Surgeries and On Farm events.

I trust that this information addresses the concerns raised by the Committee and I assure you that the information provided in advance of future sessions will be in a far greater depth.



Alun Davies AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd
Minister for Natural Resources and Food

Recommendation 1

A communication plan has been produced and the communications programme for Glastir is being rolled out as outlined under Recommendation 2 below.

Recommendation 2

Welsh Government is now producing a 4-page Glastir section in each edition of Gwlad. Articles covered to date include practical and technical advice, case studies and key dates.

Glastir Drop-in Surgeries began in February and Glastir On-farm events will commence at the end of April.

The monthly Farming Connect bulletin now contains a Glastir section providing the key messages.

Closer working partnership with the farming unions have resulted in our drop-in surgeries being promoted on the union's web pages.

Recommendation 3

I have asked my officials to assess the attendance levels during the Drop-in Surgeries and On-farm events and to evaluate the support given. As noted in my response to your enquiry, a further assessment of the options selected and the reasons for poor uptake of any individual options will be undertaken at the end of the year.

Recommendation 4

The details of the drop-in surgeries were published in the January/February edition of Gwlad. Details of the on-farm events have been published in the March/April edition of Gwlad. I attached the schedule for both the Drop-in surgeries (as Annex B) and the On-farm events (as Annex C) for your benefit.

Recommendation 5

I have already submitted to the committee the outcomes of the review in to recordkeeping.

Recommendation 6

The method for paying capital works is being explained to potential applicants at the Drop-in Surgeries and will form part of the On-farm events. An article is being drafted for the May/June edition of Gwlad. The May/June edition is considered the most suitable to publish as we expect the interest to increase as the July cut-off point becomes closer.

Recommendation 7

I have not made any arrangement to review the payment rates.

Recommendation 8

Further to my original response to the Committee, I am seeking further clarification on the new Rural Development Regulations and the effect of

'Greening' of direct payments before I consider any changes to the payment mechanism.

Recommendation 9

Following a series of stakeholder meetings and a SWOT analysis of the current forestry situation, both of which have informed the work of the RDP Advisory Group, chaired by Peter Davies, Forestry Commission Wales and, from April 2013, Natural Resources Wales, have been instructed to develop proposals for a forestry grant scheme to be supported under the next Rural Development Plan for Wales 2014 to 2020. A working group, comprising Welsh Government and FCW/NRW officials, as well as forestry sector stakeholders representing a cross-section of forestry interests, has been set up to take this work forward to ensure Wales has a comprehensive suite of woodland support schemes.

Recommendation 10

Once there is clarification on CAP pillar 1 regulations and payments and the new Rural Development Regulations, I will consult with stakeholders before making any changes to Glastir.

Glastir On-farm Events 2013

Date	Time	Event	Location
30 April	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Gelli Aur College Farm, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA32 8NJ
3 May	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Moelhebog Uchaf, Pontsian, Llandysul, SA44 4UB
17 May	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Hendrephilip, Llwynygroes, Tregaron, SY25 6QB
20 May	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Hendre Nantcyll, Pantglas, Garndolbenmaen, LL51 9DJ
22 May	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Weobley Castle Farm, Gower, Swansea, SA31 1HB
23 May	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Camrose Sports Club, The Folly, Folly Cross, Camrose, Pembrokeshire, SA62 6JG
3 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Gelli, Cymmer, Neath Port Talbot, SA13 3NN
5 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Bodrida, Brynsiencyn, Anglesey, LL61 6NZ
10 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Clearwell Farm, Michaelstone-y-Fedw, Cardiff, CF3 6XT
12 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Trewylan Ganol, Llansanffraid, Powys, SY22 6TJ
14 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Cwmwhitton, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1NL
17 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Tan Llan, Llanefydd, Dinbych, Conwy, LL16 5DY
19 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Slade Farm Organics, Pitcot Farm, St Brides Major, Vale of Glamorgan, CF32 0TE
24 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Dolobran, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth, Gwynedd, SY209LX
26 June	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Goitre, Kerry, Newtown, Powys, SA16 4NA
3 July	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Rhosferrig, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3PT
5 July	13:00 – 17:00	Glastir Open Day	Caerhys Organic Farm, St Davids, Pembrokeshire, SA62 6DX

Digwyddiadau Glastir Ar Ffermydd 2013

Date	Time	Event	Location
30 Ebril	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Fferm Coleg Gelli Aur, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin, SA32 8NJ
3 Mai	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Diwrnod Agored Glastir Moelhebog Uchaf, Pontsian, Llandysul, SA44 4UB
17 Mai	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Hendrephilip, Llwynygroes, Tregaron, SY25 6QB
20 Mai	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Hendre Nancyll, Pantglas, Garndolbenmaen, LL51 9DJ
22 Mai	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Fferm Weobley Castle, Penrhyn Gw^yr Abertawe SA31 1HB
23 Mai	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Ciwb Chwaraeon Camros, The Folly, Folly Cross, Camros, Sir Benfro, SA62 6JG
3 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Gelli, Cymer, Castell-nedd Port Talbot, SA13 3NN
5 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Bodrida, Brynsiencyn, Ynys Mon, LL61 6NZ
10 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Fferm Clearwell, Michaelstone-y-Fedw, Caerdydd, CF3 6XT
12 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Trewylan Ganol, Llansanffraid, SY22 6TJ
14 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Cwmwhitton, Trefyclo, LD7 1NL
17 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Tan Llan, Llanefydd, Dinbych, Conwy, LL16 5DY
19 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Slade Farm Organics, Fferm Pitcot, Saint-y-brid, Bro Morgannwg, CF32 0TE
24 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Dolobran, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth, Gwynedd, SY209LX
26 Mehefin	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Goetre, Ceri, Y Drenewydd, Powys, SA16 4NA
3 Gorffennaf	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Rhosferrig, Llanfair ym Muallt, Powys, LD2 3PT
5 Gorffennaf	13:00 – 17:00	Diwrnod Agored Glastir	Fferm Organig Caerhys, Tŷ Ddewi, Sir Benfro, SA62 6DX

Glastir Drop-in Surgeries 2013

Date	Location	Time
19/02/2013	Neuadd Llanuwchllyn, Bala, LL23 7TT	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
21/02/2013	Aberaeron Rugby Club, North Road, Aberaeron, SA46 0DY	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
26/02/2013	Village Hall, Llanbadarn Fynydd, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 6YH	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
05/03/2013	Letterston Memorial Hall, Station Rd, Letterston, SA62 5RY	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
06/03/2013	Clwb Rygbi Dolgellau, LL40 1UU	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
12/03/2013	Llandovery Rugby club, Church Bank, Llandovery, SA20 0DT	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
12/03/2013	Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, NP16 6BU	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
14/03/2013	Neuadd Bentref Cynwyl Elfed, Caerfyrddin, SA33 6TR	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
19/03/2013	The Barley Mow, Graig Penllyn, Cowbridge, CF71 7RT	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
26/03/2013	Gwesty'r Bull, Bulkely Square, Llangefni, LL77 7LR	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
04/04/2013	Coleg Gelli Aur, Golden Grove, SA32 8NJ	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
04/04/2013	Bod Erw Hotel, Llanelwy, LL17 0LA	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
09/04/2013	Gwesty'r Porth Hotel, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 4QS	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
11/04/2013	Haverfordwest Cricket Club, Dale Rd, Haverfordwest, SA61 1HZ	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
16/04/2013	Neath Rugby Club, Neath, SA11 3BU	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
23/04/2013	Greyhound Inn, Old Walls, Llanrhydian, Swansea, Gower SA3 1HA	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
25/04/2013	Clwb Rygbi Nant Conwy, Part Carw, Trefriw, Llanrwst, LL26 0PW	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
01/05/2013	Neuadd Glantwymyn, Glantwymyn, Machynlleth, SY20 8LX	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
02/05/2013	Llanidloes Community Centre, Mount Lane, Llanidloes, Powys	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
21/05/2013	Canolfan Hamden Glaslyn, Stryd y Llan, Porthmadog, LL49 9HW	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
21/05/2013	Merthyr Cynog Village Hall, Upper Chapel, Brecon, LD3 9RG	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
23/05/2013	Coleg Glynllifon, Ffordd Clynnog, Glynllifon, Caernarfon, LL54 5DU	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00

29/05/2013	Beaufort Park, Mold, CH7 6RQ	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
30/05/2013	Public Hall, Back Street, Llanrhaeadr y Mochnant, SY10 9L	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
04/06/2013	Nant Y FFin Motel , Clynderwen, SA66 7SU	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
06/06/2013	Sennybridge Village Hall, Sennybridge, Brecon, LD3 5RR	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
11/06/2013	Congl Meincia, Botwnnog, Pwllheli, LL53 8RA	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
13/06/2013	Clwb Rygbi Rhuthin, Cae Ddol, Rhuthin, LL15 2AA	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
18/06/2013	Holt Lodge, Holt, Wrexham, LL13 9SW	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
20/06/2013	Neuadd Rhydypennau, Bowstreet, Ceredigion, SY24 5BQ	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
25/06/2013	Village Hall, Talybont-on-Usk, Brecon, LD3 7YQ	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
27/06/2013	Talbot Hotel, Tregaron, SY25 6JL	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
01/07/2013	Marchnad y Trallwng, Buttington, Y Trallwng, SY21 8SR	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
02/07/2013	Parish Room, Cerrigydrudion, Corwen, LL21 9SR	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00
04/07/2013	Alice Springs Golf Club, Kemmeys Commander, Usk, NP15 1PP	Drop-in anytime 10:00 – 16:00