

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1566
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/02081/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

27 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 7 November regarding Petition P-06-1566 on Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), including Cosmeston LNR.

The Welsh Government recognises the important role that LNRs play in supporting biodiversity and providing opportunities for public engagement with nature. LNRs are designations by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and their management and protection are primarily the responsibility of the local authority.

The planning system has a key responsibility in securing positive biodiversity outcomes. [Planning policy Wales | GOV.WALES](#) 12 (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and it is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. PPW sets out a strong framework for the protection of non-statutory nature designations, such as Local Nature Reserves.

Planning policy states at paragraph 6.4.31 that, “although non-statutory designations do not have a statutory process for their protection, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Regionally Importance Geodiversity Sites make a vital contribution to delivering an ecological network for biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, and they should be given protection in development plans and the development management process. Non-statutory sites can form the core of a vital network of threatened habitats, play an essential role in protecting, maintaining, connecting and restoring biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery and a net benefit for biodiversity. Before authorising development likely to damage a local wildlife designation, planning authorities should give notice of the proposed operation to the local authority Ecologist and third sector environmental organisations. In all cases a written opinion must be secured from the local authority Ecologist.”

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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.

We expect all public bodies to comply with their statutory duties under existing legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

We already have in place the section 6 biodiversity duty with its overarching aim of integrating biodiversity considerations into authorities' functions. This requires public authorities who operate in Wales to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems throughout their functions and activities.

Also, the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill will strengthen the framework for biodiversity recovery across Wales. The Bill will also help to improve the implementation of the section 6 biodiversity duty through the introduction of legally binding targets and governance arrangements. While the Bill does not create new duties specific to LNRs, its provisions will reinforce the requirement for public bodies to consider biodiversity in decision-making and planning processes. The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill is a crucial piece of legislation that will empower us to safeguard our environment and ensure a sustainable future for Wales.

The establishment of the Office of Environmental Governance Wales (OEGW) will provide a route for complaints and enforcement where public authorities fail to comply with environmental law.

Thank you for writing to me on behalf of the Petitions Committee on this important matter. I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,



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