



# **Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru** **The National Assembly for Wales**

## **Y Pwyllgor Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd** **The Environment and Sustainability Committee**

**Dydd Iau, 1 Mai 2014**  
**Thursday, 1 May 2014**

### **Cynnwys** **Contents**

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon  
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

Rheoli Tir yn Gynaliadwy—Tystiolaeth gan y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd  
Sustainable Land Management—Evidence from the Minister for Natural Resources and Food

Papurau i'w Nodi  
Papers to Note

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod  
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,  
cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.  
In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

### **Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol** **Committee members in attendance**

Mick Antoniw

Llafur  
Labour

Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Julie James	Llafur Labour
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan	Llafur Labour
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Antoinette Sandbach	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

**Eraill yn bresennol  
Others in attendance**

Kevin Austin	Pennaeth y Gangen Rheoli Tir yn Gynaliadwy, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of Sustainable Land Management, Welsh Government
Alun Davies	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd) Assembly Member, Labour (Minister for Natural Resources and Food)
Nicola Thomas	Pennaeth Cyflawni, Newid Hinsawdd a Rheoli Adnoddau Naturiol, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of Implementation, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management, Welsh Government

**Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol  
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Alun Davidson	Clerc Clerk
Elfyn Henderson	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Catherine Hunt	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Nia Seaton	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:33.  
The meeting began at 09:33.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon  
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A gaf i eich croesawu i gyd i'r pwyllgor? Os bydd larwm tân, bydd angen i bawb ddilyn y cyfarwyddiadau. Nid oes prawf heddiw, i fod, felly bydd y lle ar dân os bydd yna larwm. Dylai ffonau symudol fod wedi eu

**Alun Ffred Jones:** May I welcome you all to the committee? If there is a fire alarm, people will need to follow the instructions. There is not meant to be a test today, so the place will be on fire if there is an alarm. Could you please ensure that mobile phones have been

diffodd ac, wrth gwrs, mae croeso i unrhyw un gyfrannu yn Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg, fel arfer. Peidiwch â chyffwrdd y botymau. A oes unrhyw un eisiau datgan buddiant ariannol o dan Reol Sefydlog 2.6?

switched off? Of course, anyone is welcome to contribute either in Welsh or in English, as usual. Do not touch the buttons. Does anybody want to declare a financial interest under Standing Order 2.6?

[2] **Antoinette Sandbach:** I would just like people to note the declarations of interest on my register.

[3] **William Powell:** I should do the same, Chair.

[4] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Fel rydym yn gwybod, mae lle gwag ar y pwyllgor ar ôl i Vaughan Gething adael i gymryd swydd fel Dirprwy Weinidog, ac rydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau gan Llyr Gruffydd.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** As we know, there is a vacancy on the committee after Vaughan Gething left to take up the post of Deputy Minister, and we have received apologies from Llyr Gruffydd.

09:34

**Rheoli Tir yn Gynaliadwy—Tystiolaeth gan y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd**  
**Sustainable Land Management—Evidence from the Minister for Natural Resources and Food**

[5] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yr ail eitem ar yr agenda ydy tystiolaeth gan y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd. A yw ef yma?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** The second item on the agenda is evidence from the Minister for Natural Resources and Food. Is he here?

[6] **Ms Hunt:** Ydy.

**Ms Hunt:** He is.

[7] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Dyma fo.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Here he is.

[8] **Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd (Alun Davies):** Bore da.

**The Minister for Natural Resources and Food (Alun Davies):** Good morning.

[9] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Bore da. Hoffwn eich croesawu, Weinidog, i'r sesiwn. Diolch i chi am ddod gerbron y pwyllgor. Dyma'r sesiwn dystiolaeth derfynol ar yr ymchwiliad i reoli tir. Rydym wedi derbyn llawer o dystiolaeth gan randdeiliaid ac wedi dechrau ffurfio casgliadau. Felly, rydym yn edrych ymlaen at glywed eich tystiolaeth chi.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Good morning. I would like to welcome you, Minister, to the session. Thank you for coming before the committee. This is the final evidence session in the inquiry into land management. We have received lots of evidence from stakeholders and have begun to form conclusions. Therefore, we look forward to hearing your evidence.

[10] Gan fod Russell George yn gorfod gadael, rwyf am ofyn iddo ddechrau gyda'i gwestiynau sydd ynglŷn â chasglu data, rwy'n credu.

Since Russell George has to leave, I want to ask him to start with his questions, which are regarding data collection, I believe.

[11] **Russell George:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Minister and colleagues. One of the themes in the evidence from nearly all the stakeholders was improving data collection and communication. Natural Resources Wales in its evidence talked about the lack of access to land managers. I wonder whether you could outline what is being done by Government or

Natural Resources Wales to improve the collection and communication of environmental data.

[12] **Alun Davies:** Thank you very much. I will just say to the new Chair, because this is the first time that I have appeared before you since you were appointed, that I would seek to use this opportunity to give you my best wishes in the new role.

[13] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn fawr. **Alun Ffred Jones:** Thank you very much.

[14] **Alun Davies:** I will also take the opportunity to introduce the officials who are supporting me this morning. Nicola Thomas is head of implementation as part of our climate change group, and Kevin Austin is our head of sustainable land management. I just want to introduce them for the record.

[15] In terms of where we are with data collection, we discussed this yesterday in questions, very briefly. The ‘State of Nature’ report last year demonstrated some real gaps in our knowledge, and also in our ability to collect knowledge, and to understand the sort of data that we require in order to set clear goals and ambitions, not only for sustainable land management, but for how we measure what that means in terms of biodiversity and the rest of it. I was in Cardiff University yesterday launching a project that will seek to fill in some of those gaps. The Sustainable Places Research Institute at the university there will be taking forward the work in terms of bringing people together to fill in some of those gaps. I can write to committee with information on this new project if the committee wishes me to do so. That might be useful to committee in terms of its further consideration of the issues.

[16] To answer your question directly in terms of NRW, we spoke last year about the creation of the data hub, if you like, and that is something that NRW will be continuing to lead on and which will be a part of the new information-gathering structures that we are putting in place.

[17] **Russell George:** What additional resources are you making available for data collection?

[18] **Alun Davies:** In terms of additional resources, we certainly have £2 million available in order to provide some initial funding for this. In terms of the resources, Natural Resources Wales is of course resourced itself to deliver on these sorts of projects and this sort of work. I do not intend to make additional resources available to NRW in order to provide this work, but we do have a £2 million fund to enable us to ensure that the data collection structures and mechanisms that we put in place are able to perform that task.

[19] **Russell George:** In terms of data collection, we had some evidence that there is an argument for landowners collecting those data themselves rather than external organisations. Can I ask for your thoughts and views on that?

[20] **Alun Davies:** A lot of data, in terms of biodiversity particularly, is collected in an informal way by what Peter Matthews, the chair of NRW, referred to as ‘citizen scientists’. It is a tried and tested means of information collection, and something that I hope we will be able to continue to do. The Welsh Government is a partner in a pan-European research project called COBWEB—the Citizen Observatory Web—which is looking at how we gather information from people and use their knowledge, experience and observational skills in a way that delivers that information in a usable way. We are looking at how we can use digital, mobile and web technologies to assist and enhance the collection of environmental data through crowdsourcing and citizen-science approaches. I hope that that will be a very useful way of adding to the information available to us. So, there are a number of sources, one of which is academic in terms of what we were doing yesterday and in terms of the biodiversity

board where we are working with the universities to do that. There is also the information hub that NRW is leading upon, and then there is the citizen side of it as well. So, there are a number of different sources that we use to collect information.

[21] **Russell George:** Lastly, do you see an enhanced role for local record centres? That is the last question, Chair.

[22] **Alun Davies:** I met with local record centres—I keep thinking that it was a few weeks ago, but it was probably at the beginning of the year or towards the end of last year; I do not know—in the last few months to talk about how their role could potentially be enhanced. They are already funded in order to provide the role that they provide. My concern is to ensure that in using all of the different sources that we have discussed this morning, we are able to deliver consistency of data, so that we can understand over time, and also that data is provided in a manageable form that enables us to use and interrogate it in an intelligent way to inform benchmarking, but also enables us to understand the impact that our approaches are having and whether we are achieving the targets that we have set ourselves.

[23] **Antoinette Sandbach:** In terms of data collection by land managers, have you, for example, considered including in Glastir an option that would gain points of having a citizen science day co-ordinated through the local records office? Very often, a number of experts will come together on a particular day to visit a farm, so that would be good to incentivise and encourage land managers to take part in this type of thing.

[24] **Alun Davies:** We are more than happy to follow this approach. We have done this before, of course. If you go back to look at previous agri-environment schemes, you will see that land managers have been asked to perform exactly that role. There has been a bit of a mixed response to that; no doubt you have read the Wales Audit Office report that discussed some of the mixed results of that. However, it has been a feature of agri-environment schemes, and it is something that we see very much in terms of—. The conversation that I had with the committee last year, I think, about the nature fund and how we want to empower people to do things rather than just tick boxes is an example of the approach that we have sought to take. I think that Kevin would like to come in on this.

[25] **Mr Austin:** I think that the Minister has primarily answered what exactly I was going to say. We previously had educational visits under the Tir Gofal scheme, as I am sure that you are aware. We did not do away with them under Glastir because we wanted to do away with them, as such. The European regulations governing agri-environment schemes and what we could pay for changed. We were advised by the European Commission that we could no longer pay in the way that we did previously under Tir Gofal for those visits. We can still pay for the capital infrastructure to support those types of visits, so that could be for hand-washing facilities, toilets and that sort of thing. We still have that provision within Glastir.

[26] **Antoinette Sandbach:** Lovely; thank you.

[27] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A gaf i symud i faes arall i sôn am ddiffiniadau? A ydych chi, Weinidog, yn cytuno bod angen diffinio ystyr rheoli tir yn gynaliadwy, gan mai dyna yw testun ein hymchwiliad?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Could I move on to look at the area of definitions? Do you agree, Minister, that there needs to be a definition of sustainable land management, as that is the topic of our inquiry?

[28] **Alun Davies:** Ydw. Fodd bynnag, fyddwn i ddim yn defnyddio'r gair 'tir'. Rwy'n ymwybodol beth yw ystyr eich gwaith yn ystod y cyfnod hwn, ond yr *approach* y mae'r Llywodraeth wedi trio ei gymryd dros

**Alun Davies:** Yes. However, I would not use the word 'land'. I am aware of the nature of your work during this period, but the approach that the Government has tried to take over the past few years is to define how

y blynyddoedd diwethaf yw diffinio sut rydym yn rheoli ein hadnoddau naturiol yn eu ffurf ehangach. Felly, byddwn yn cytuno gyda chi mewn egwyddor, ond byddwn yn sôn aboutu dŵr, moroedd ac awyr hefyd. Felly, ni fyddwn yn sôn am y tir ar wahân i'r adnoddau naturiol eraill.

we manage our natural resources in their widest sense. So, I would agree with you in principle, but I would also cover water, seas and air. So, I would not concentrate on land being a separate issue to the other natural resources that we have.

09:45

[29] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae awgrym wedi cael ei wneud y dylai unrhyw ddiffiniad fod yn seiliedig ar gyfres o egwyddorion allweddol. Ai dyna'r ffordd y byddech yn meddwl amdano?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** It has been suggested that any definition should be based on a series of key principles. Is that the way that you would think of it?

[30] **Alun Davies:** Ar hyn o bryd, rydym yn dilyn y broses sydd wedi ei hamlinellu yn y Papur Gwyn o ran y Bil amgylchedd. Mae hwnnw wedi cael ei gyhoeddi yn barod. Rwy'n hapus iawn gyda'r math o ddiffiniadau sydd yn y Papur Gwyn; nid wyf yn gwybod os ydych wedi trafod hynny fel pwyllgor fel rhan o'ch gwaith yn ystod yr ymchwiliad hwn. Mae'r diffiniadau o'r termau hyn wedi cael eu gosod a'u disgrifio yn y Papur Gwyn, ac nid wyf am symud i ffwrdd o hynny oni bai bod rheswm da iawn am wneud hynny.

**Alun Davies:** At present, we are following the process outlined in the White Paper on the environment Bill. That has already been published. I am very content with the kind of definitions contained in the White Paper; I do not know whether you have discussed that as a committee as part of your work during this inquiry. The definitions of these terms have been set out and described in the White Paper, and I would not want to move away from those unless there is a very good reason to do so.

[31] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A oes rhywun sydd am ddod i mewn ar y mater hwn? Mick.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Does anyone wish to come in on this issue? Mick.

[32] **Mick Antoniw:** We can obsess too much about a definition, which, by its very nature, will not be an answer. Obviously, it is about the substance of the Bill. Are we not just better off trying to look for a common narrative? I agree with you that there has to be consistency, but it is really about the narrative around it, rather than getting obsessed with the imposition of the definition, important though it is.

[33] **Alun Davies:** Yes, I would broadly agree with you, Mick. Sometimes, as you say, people obsess about definitions as a means of avoiding doing anything. I feel that the definition—and I will just turn to it in the White Paper; it is on pages 16-18 and then page 19—outlines the understanding that we have of the sustainable management of our natural resources and the actions and classes of action that we would seek to take in order to deliver that sustainable management, and then also defines what we mean by 'natural resources'. That sets it out in some detail. We are looking, at the moment, at the responses to this White Paper. I do not think that we have collected any significant disagreement with this definition, so I am pretty confident that these definitions are accepted publicly by stakeholders. However, the main point that I would make is absolutely to agree with you, Mick, that we can spend too much time looking at definitions and forget what we are actually seeking to achieve.

[34] **Julie Morgan:** I agree with that point, but obviously it is important that we have a set of agreed principles, which I think you have agreed with. How will we be certain that those principles are carried consistently through all of the different bits of legislation that are going

through? This is a current theme: we have these three Bills, and we want to make sure that they contain the same principles. What can we do to ensure that that happens?

[35] **Alun Davies:** The committee will have an important role to play in ensuring that what the Government is proposing has that level of consistency and coherence. I have met both Jeff Cuthbert and Carl Sargeant this week to discuss the future generations Bill and the planning Bill, and we meet on a very regular basis to discuss the broad principles that underpin the legislation, in exactly the way that you have described, Julie. However, we also discuss in a lot more detail what we are seeking to enact and how that will affect each individual Bill—that is, the interdependencies and interfaces between the pieces of legislation—and what sort of statutory framework we are creating via these three pieces of legislation. They need to be dovetailed and complementary, and we need to ensure that they work together. At the moment, I am very confident that that is happening. The conversations that I have had with my colleague Ministers have been very positive, and they have been both at the level of principle and philosophy, if you like, but also practice. We are in a position now where the planning Bill and the future generations Bill will be published later this term, and the environment Bill will follow. I am hoping that certainly parts of it will be published—a draft should be published by Christmas. That will enable us then to actually look at the relationship between those pieces of legislation. However, we do meet on a regular basis, and I am very confident in the way that we are working together.

[36] **Alun Ffred Jones:** However, there is no reference to sustainability at all in the planning Bill at the moment.

[37] **Alun Davies:** The planning Bill fits into, and creates a process and a structure into which the environment Bill will fit. If you look at the planning Bill, and if you look at the future generations Bill, I think that you will see terminology and structures that complement each other.

[38] **Antoinette Sandbach:** It is clear that, in the forestry sector, there has been sustainable forest management that has been defined at a European level. That has been very helpful for the forestry sector, meaning that the same criteria are applied across Europe. That helps to make a level playing field. What are you doing, Minister, to look at definitions of sustainable land management in a European context, and to see whether or not Europe will be adopting the same kind of definitions or key principles that you are seeking to adopt here?

[39] **Alun Davies:** I attend Council of Ministers meetings. There is nothing happening within the institutions of the European Union that is either a surprise to us or to which we do not already contribute. We actively contribute to those discussions, certainly in the work—. If you take a look at Glastir, the Commission is looking to us and learning from us in some ways in terms of what we are doing. We are not a recipient of some of these things; we are an active participant in those debates.

[40] **Antoinette Sandbach:** I think that what I am saying is that, in terms of sustainable land management, clearly it has the ability to impact on a number of sectors. You will know, Minister, that I am concerned about level playing fields. It may well be that you are leading on this, but what I am asking you is—I accept that you attend Council of Ministers meetings—what are you seeking to do to get a definition at a European level that would accord with the kind of principles that you are seeking to have here?

[41] **Alun Davies:** The sorts of principles that we have here are—. We take the definitions further here than they have been taken in many European member states. However, the sorts of definitions and the sorts of structures that we are putting in place in Wales are well-known and well-recognised both at a European and a United Nations level. If you look at the work that Jeff is leading on, in terms of the future generations Bill, that fits directly into a UN

structure, not simply a European structure. The sorts of structures that we are putting in place for the sustainable management of our national resources in Wales both rely upon definitions that have been accepted by the United Nations and by the European Union, and also take those definitions further. So, I think that we are absolutely centre stage in all of those discussions and debates. I have not come across a single incident or example of where we are not in line with the accepted international definitions or norms in any of these discussions or debates.

[42] **Alun Ffred Jones:** William Powell is next.

[43] **William Powell:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Bore da, Weinidog. I would like to ask you for your understanding about another of these terms that is bandied about quite a bit and might cause confusion in some quarters, namely the concept of sustainable intensification. I wonder whether you could give us, in a nutshell, what you understand by that, and what you feel that it has to contribute to the future of the industry.

[44] **Alun Davies:** In terms of sustainable intensification, every time that I hear someone say that I get a different view from them on what it actually means. I would be interested to know what you think, Bill. In terms of where we are now, I would tend to use the description 'sustainable production' rather than 'sustainable intensification'. I think that one of the difficulties that we faced in the past is that we always sought to create a very false, stale and sterile debate between sustainable land management, sustainable management of our natural resources, and production of food. People have said—and it has been put to me a thousand times—you can either have one or the other, which is a ludicrous proposal, of course, and it is not one that I accept for one moment. Some of the debates that we have had take us back to the 1970s in some ways. However, if we want to be able to continue to produce food, we have to do it in a sustainable way. Anybody who has studied soils recently, for example, will understand that, if you work in an unsustainable way, you do not have a sustainable business model let alone a sustainable environmental model. So, I would prefer to talk about sustainable production rather than sustainable intensification in quite the way that, sometimes, these terms are used.

[45] **William Powell:** Are you sympathetic to the views that some of the stakeholders who have contributed to this inquiry have expressed—I am thinking particularly of the young farmers of Wales—about the fact that, when all is said and done, it is actually food production and the delivery of food security that should have primacy in the industry and in the way that we approach the future of that industry?

[46] **Alun Davies:** No. As soon as you start saying, 'We exist to do this and that's all we do', I think that you are taking a very blinkered view of what we are actually doing here. If you look at what structures are in place in order to sustain and support agricultural production in Wales, you will see that pillar 1 is not simply about income support, which it is partly about, but about supporting farm businesses, assuming that they operate in a particular way, and the greening 30% element is part of that. Pillar 2 is all about the things that are in addition to that and complementary to it. I think that the days when somebody simply said, 'We do this and we don't do anything else' are over. That argument, as I said in an earlier answer, is an argument that belongs to the twentieth century. If we are talking about sustainable production in Wales, whatever the sector of agriculture happens to be, we need to ensure that we have sustainability in the long term and that we do not produce today at the expense of tomorrow. That is the short-termism that leads to significant difficulties, in terms of agriculture and other sectors as well. Certainly, the debates I have been a part of with regard to fisheries are a good example of that.

[47] So, with regard to where we are now, I reject the false dichotomy and the false choice that we have been given by some people. I think that we need land managers who are able to



deliver on a number of different fronts. One of those fronts is food production. Other aspects of that include environmental management and sustainable natural resource management. There are other things as well, whether in terms of energy or of other elements of diversification. So, there are a number of different aspects that will sustain a farm business model in future. Food production is certainly a significant part of that, but if it is seen as the only part of that, then I think that we will be missing out on a significant aspect of what farming is about and always has been about in reality.

[48] **William Powell:** I am grateful for that answer, Minister, but when I said ‘primacy’ I was not talking about exclusivity. I was talking about the fact that it should be of prime importance ultimately, for the future—

[49] **Alun Davies:** But each individual farm business, Bill, is going to be different, is it not?

[50] **William Powell:** Yes.

[51] **Alun Davies:** So, each individual farm business will have a different balance of what it delivers. A farm business that might deliver food production might also deliver tourism in some particular way. It might deliver something else. A farm business that is a part of Glastir Advanced, for argument’s sake, will be delivering significant aspects of sustainable resource management as well. So, to simply say, ‘This is the primacy here, this is the primacy there’ is, I think, somewhat of a false choice and a false argument, and those are the sterile, stale, tedious, old arguments of the past. What we need to do—and I hope the committee agrees here—is to ensure that we are able to do all of these different things together to ensure that we do have sustainability hardwired into the future, and that is business sustainability, financial sustainability and social sustainability, as well as environmental and natural resources sustainability. So, we need to get all of these different things right, rather than simply trying to say that we do one and not the other, or we do one here and the other there, which I think misses the whole breadth of the debate that has been taking place over the past few decades.

10:00

[52] **William Powell:** Thanks for that.

[53] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, we have moved into farm profitability and food production, so can we just stay on that for the time being? Antoinette, you are next.

[54] **Antoinette Sandbach:** Minister, the land use policy group, which included representatives from NRW, looked at sustainable intensification, and of the 20 farms that took part, only four managed to increase yields and deliver environmental benefits. Given that that is 25%, what is your strategy if there is a relatively low take-up of Glastir and Glastir Advanced, or you find that people decide to leave Glastir and Glastir Advanced, in terms of impacting on sustainable land management? That is your main vehicle for delivery, is it not?

[55] **Alun Davies:** In terms of the Glastir that will be available under the new RDP, I will be making a statement on it following the Whitsun recess, and I will be making a series of statements about the different opportunities that will be available under the new RDP and within the new RDP to deliver on all of these matters before the summer recess. I actually think that there will be a very good take-up of Glastir; the conversations that I have had with people up and down Wales indicate that that is the case and that it will be the case, and I am absolutely confident that that will happen.

[56] **Antoinette Sandbach:** In terms of Glastir, which is your method of delivery, if you like, of this programme, you have given assurances to this committee previously that the early

adopters would not be penalised for being in Glastir contracts and that they would be able to switch contracts. What steps are you taking to ensure that they can take advantage of what you would describe as an opportunity?

[57] **Alun Davies:** There has been no change to the points that I have made to committee before on these matters. If there are significant changes to a contract that would be available to farmers who are already contracted to Glastir, they will have the opportunity either to have the changes incorporated in their contract or to sign a new contract in due course according to their choice. That has been the case for some years, and it continues to be the case. However, let me say this: you refer to Glastir as the only way, or the main way, of delivering on sustainable natural resource management. That is partly the case, but it is not the case in totality. We are looking at putting in place structures whereby NRW particularly will be taking an area-based approach under the new environmental Bill structures, which will deliver sustainable natural resource management that is not simply reliant on Glastir, but which will involve a number of different players and partners delivering the sort of natural resource management that we want to see on an area basis and on a landscape basis, which goes beyond simply Glastir. So, Glastir is an element of this, but I do not want anybody on the committee to believe that it is the only element or the only tool that we have available to us.

[58] **Antoinette Sandbach:** I accept that, and I know that NRW has been looking at river catchment areas, for example, and that there are priority 1 areas that form part of that water management. However, there are priority 1 areas that are not, at the moment, obtaining grant, and there is no reason given for why some priority 1 areas on river catchment have been included and others have not.

[59] **Alun Davies:** We are introducing an area-based approach at the moment. There are three areas where this is being trialled by NRW: the Dyfi, the Tywi and the Rhondda. We are taking forward the lessons that are being learned from that approach. I shall be making some further announcements on this next week as to how we will fund and support that approach, and how we will expand it into other areas as well. However, those are the three areas that NRW has chosen at the moment in order to begin to deliver this area-based approach. When we have the environment Bill in place, then we will have a structure to deliver this across the face of the whole country. How you deliver it in different places will, of course, be different. Clearly, you will deliver differently in Snowdonia from how you deliver in the Brecon Beacons or in Blaenau Gwent. That is self-evidently the case, and we will involve different players and different stakeholders in those different areas and we will be doing things differently. That is the whole point of having an area-based approach, which goes beyond individual land ownership issues, and the announcements that I will make on Glastir following the Whitsun recess will actually flesh out some of these matters. However, what we are seeking to do is to move beyond simply Glastir to work in a far more intelligent and sophisticated way, which will actually deliver on a much wider agenda. I think that Kevin wants to come in.

[60] **Mr Austin:** I think your question possibly alludes to the fact that there is a river catchment priority 1 area that was not targeted for funding through Glastir. Is that the root of your question?

[61] **Antoinette Sandbach:** There is a river catchment area of priority 1 and my understanding was—. I have a particular case in mind, so maybe it is better that I write to you about it.

[62] **Mr Austin:** That is fine. I think, probably, that the difference here is that, for Glastir, we only target for funding river catchment priorities where the primary course of failure, in terms of reaching water quality standards, is an agricultural activity. So, obviously, if we are targeting farmers, they would be the obvious river catchments to target.

[63] **Antoinette Sandbach:** However, there is a priority 1 area designated by Natural Resources Wales where the primary activity is farming and where farmers in one part of the river are getting support and others are not. That kind of implementation is in the Conwy valley.

[64] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Gan ein bod wedi symud i faes arall rŵan, sef y maes hwn o ardaloedd penodol yn cael eu rheoli mewn ffyrdd gwahanol, efallai y gallwn ganolbwyntio ychydig ar hynny. Hynny yw, ai eich gweledigaeth chi yw bod gennych chi ryw fath o fframwaith cenedlaethol ac, o fewn hwnnw, y bydd gennych ardaloedd penodol lle bydd y cynlluniau yn cael eu gweithredu mewn ffyrdd gwahanol?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** As we have moved on to another area now, namely this area of specific areas being managed in different ways, maybe we could concentrate a little on that. That is, is it your vision that you have some sort of national framework and that, within that, you will have specific areas where the schemes will be implemented in different ways?

[65] **Alun Davies:** Rwy'n credu bod hynny yn ddadansoddiad digon teg o le rydym yn mynd. Os ydych yn darllen drwy'r Papur Gwyn, byddwch yn gweld y bydd datganiad cenedlaethol gan Weinidogion Cymru o beth rydym eisiau ei weld a'r math o dargedau y bydd gennym, ac wedyn, i sicrhau ein bod yn cyrraedd y targedau, bydd ffyrdd o wneud hynny. Mi fydd polisi lefel uchel ar adnoddau naturiol cenedlaethol yn dod o Lywodraeth Cymru. Wedyn, bydd *approach* rheoli a fydd yn seiliedig ar ardaloedd gwahanol, yn union fel rydych wedi ei ddisgrifio, a byddwn yn adrodd yn ôl ar ganlyniadau ein gwaith pob pum mlynedd. Felly, bydd ffyrdd o ddatgan polisi, rheoli'r gweithredu polisi ac wedyn adrodd yn ôl ar sut mae'r polisi wedi gweithio.

**Alun Davies:** I think that that is a fair analysis of the direction of travel. If you read through the White Paper, you will see that there will be a national statement by Welsh Ministers on what we want to see and the types of targets that we will have, and then, in order to ensure that we achieve those targets, there will be ways of achieving that. There will be a high-level natural resources national policy that will emerge from Welsh Government. Then, there will be a management approach that will be based on different areas, exactly as you described, and we will report back on the outcomes of our work on a five-yearly basis. So, there will be a way of making the policy statement, managing and implementing the policy and then reporting back on how the policy has worked.

[66] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Rydych wedi cychwyn gyda thair ardal sy'n cael eu diffinio gan afonydd penodol. Ai dyna'r hyn rydych yn rhagweld i'r dyfodol ar gyfer gweddill Cymru?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** You have started with three areas that have been defined by specific rivers. Is that what you foresee in the future for the rest of Wales?

[67] **Alun Davies:** Nid wyf am wneud ymrwymiad rhy gadarn i hynny ar hyn o bryd. Mae NRW wedi dewis yr ardaloedd hyn i ystyried sut y byddai'n gweithio yn ymarferol. Pan fyddaf yn gwneud datganiad i'r Cynulliad yr wythnos nesaf ar y gronfa natur, byddaf yn datgan hefyd fy mod yn mynd i ariannu cynlluniau a fydd yn edrych ar ardaloedd gwahanol nad ydynt yn seiliedig ar *catchments*. Felly, rydym yn ystyried ar hyn o bryd y ffyrdd gorau o wneud hynny. Rwy'n fodlon bod yn eithaf pragmatig ac

**Alun Davies:** I do not want to make too firm a commitment to that at present. NRW has selected these areas in order to consider how this could work on a practical basis. When I make a statement to the Assembly next week on the nature fund, I will also state that I am going to fund plans that will look at different areas that are not based on river catchments. Therefore, we are currently considering the best ways of doing that. I am happy to be quite pragmatic and to look at what works in different parts of the country, and not to be

edrych ar beth sy'n gweithio mewn rhannau gwahanol o'r wlad a pheidio bod yn rhy bengaled a dweud, 'Dyma'r model sydd gyda ni a dyna'r unig fodel a fydd yn gweithio lle bynnag ydyn ni yng Nghymru'.

[68] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A phwy fydd yn gweinyddu'r cynlluniau lleol hyn? Ai Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru?

[69] **Alun Davies:** Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru mewn partneriaeth, wrth gwers, gydag eraill.

[70] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae peth o'r dystiolaeth rydym wedi ei chael i mewn yn awgrymu y dylid rhoi llawer mwy o gyfrifoldeb i'r rhai sy'n gyfrifol am reoli'r tir, boed y rheini'n ffermwyr, neu beth bynnag, ac y dylid eu cynnwys a rhoi mwy o gyfrifoldebau, yn sicr, a dyletswyddau ar eu hysgwyddau nhw'n unigol, yn hytrach na bod rhywun yn rhywle yn diffinio, 'Dyma'ch cynllun chi ac fe fyddwn ni'n dod heibio i wneud yn saff eich bod wedi gweithredu'r cynllun hwnnw', fel plismon. A ydych chi'n rhagweld symud o gwbl i ddynesiad felly?

[71] **Alun Davies:** Rwyf wedi trafod hyn o'r blaen, a liciwn i weld symudiad o'r fath. Beth sydd wedi digwydd yn y gorffennol yw bod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi derbyn y cyfrifoldeb, ac mae'r *audit responsibilities* wedi aros yn y fan hon i ryw raddau. Rydym wedi mynnu bod rhywun sydd â chytundeb Glastir, er enghraifft, yn cadw dyddiadur a phob math o bethau er mwyn inni allu sicrhau'r archwilwyr bod y cynllun yn cael ei weithredu'n iawn a bod yr arian yn cael ei wario yn y ffordd rydym ni wedi addo ac wedi cytuno y byddai. Mae'r Llywodraeth wedi cymryd cyfrifoldeb am hynny.

[72] Liciwn i rannu'r cyfrifoldeb a gweld pobl sydd â chytundebau yn cymryd mwy o gyfrifoldeb eu hunain i sicrhau eu bod yn gyfrifol am y ffordd maen nhw'n gweithio a chydweithio ar eu tir eu hunain. Yn amlwg, mae goblygiadau i hynny. Os ydynt yn derbyn y cyfrifoldeb hynny—sut y gallaf ddweud hyn?—mae goblygiadau i hynny. Os oes cam neu broblem, bydd y gosb yn fwy. Rwy'n gwybod bod pobl yn fodlon derbyn y cyfrifoldeb, ond bydd lot mwy o ansicrwydd wedyn amboutu'r gosb a fydd efallai'n dilyn

too hard-headed in saying, 'This is the model that we have and this is the only model that can work wherever we are in Wales'.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Who will administer these local plans? Will it be Natural Resources Wales?

**Alun Davies:** NRW, in partnership, of course, with others.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Some of the evidence that we have received suggests that much more responsibility should be placed on those responsible for managing the land, whether they are farmers, or whatever, and that they should be included and given more responsibilities, certainly, and duties on their shoulders individually, rather than there being someone somewhere saying, 'This is your plan and we will be coming along to ensure that you have implemented that plan', as a policeman. Do you foresee any move to that sort of approach?

**Alun Davies:** I have discussed this in the past, and I would like to see such a direction of travel. What has happened in the past is that the Welsh Government has taken the responsibility, and the audit responsibilities have remained here to a certain extent. We have insisted that someone with a Glastir agreement, for example, should keep a diary and all sorts of other things so that we can assure auditors that the plan is being implemented properly and that the funding is being spent in the way that we have pledged and agreed that it would. The Government has taken on that responsibility.

I would like to share the responsibility and see people who have contracts taking more responsibility themselves to ensure that they are responsible for the way in which they work and collaborate on their own land. Clearly, there are implications to that. If they take on that responsibility—how can I put this?—there are implications to that. If there is a problem, the penalty will be greater. I know that people are willing to take on that responsibility, but there is a lot more uncertainty about the penalty that could ensue

os oes broblem.

if there is a problem.

[73] Rydym wedi bod yn trafod hyn ers rhai blynnyddoedd. Nid wyf yn credu ein bod wedi dod i benderfyniad terfynol eto, ond mae'n rhywbeth rwyf i wedi bod yn ystyried ac rwy'n credu mai'r *earned entitlement* yw'r ffordd y dylem symud ymlaen. Liciwn i weld ein bod yn symud ymlaen yn y cyfeiriad hwnnw.

We have been discussing this over a period of years. I do not believe that we have come to a final decision yet, but it is something that I have been considering and I think that earned entitlement should be the direction of travel for us. I would like to see us moving in that direction.

[74] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn nodi bod hufenfa Hwlfordd yn enghraifft gadarnhaol o sut mae ffermwyr yn cael eu grymuso i wneud penderfyniadau. A ydych chi'n gyfarwydd â'r arbrawf hwnnw, neu'r—

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Natural Resources Wales noted that the Haverfordwest creamery is a good example of how farmers are empowered to make decisions. Are you aware of that experiment, or—

[75] **Alun Davies:** Ar y *nitrates*, ie? Ydw.

**Alun Davies:** On the nitrates, yes? Yes, I am.

[76] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A ydych chi'n credu bod hwnnw'n enghraifft, efallai, o'r ffordd ymlaen i weithredu?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** Do you think that that is an example, perhaps, of the way forward to implement?

[77] **Alun Davies:** Mae'n enghraifft o'r hyn a all ddigwydd. Fe welais i'r hyn roedd NRW yn dweud. Ydy, mae'n enghraifft o beth all ddigwydd. Rwyf ofn ambell waith y bydd pobl yn dweud, 'Reit, gallwn ni wneud hyn ym mhob rhan o'r wlad'. Mae'r hyn sy'n digwydd yn Hwlfordd yn delio ag un peth ac un *issue* mewn ffordd unigol. Ni allwch wneud hynny ym mhob man. Felly, ydy, mae'n enghraifft o beth gallwn ei wneud ac o beth sy'n bosibl, ond nid yw'n enghraifft o beth gallwn ei wneud yn eich ardal chi, efallai, yng Nghaernarfon. Buaswn yn ofnus petai pobl yn meddwl mai dyna yw'r *silver bullet*. Ond, mae'n enghraifft o beth sy'n bosibl.

**Alun Davies:** It is an example of what can happen. I saw what NRW had to say. Yes, it is an example of what can be done. I am a little concerned on occasion that people will say, 'Right, we can adopt this in all parts of the country'. What happens in Haverfordwest deals with one thing and one issue in an individual way. You cannot replicate that in all areas. Therefore, it is an example of what we can do and what is possible, but it is not an example of what we could do in your area, for example, in Caernarfon. I would be concerned if people were to get the impression that this is the silver bullet. However, it is an example of what is possible.

[78] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Roedd yn wir, gyda'r hen gynllun Tir Cymen, bod Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru fel petai wedi llwyddo i gael ffermwyr i brynu i mewn i'r syniad hwnnw, mewn ffordd, efallai, na lwyddodd wedyn. Roedd hynny'n ymwneud â'r ffordd yr oedd Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru wedi mynd ati i geisio cymell amaethwyr i gymryd diddordeb ac i ddeall beth oedd yn digwydd. A ydych chi'n credu bod gwersi i'w dysgu o hynny hefyd?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** It was true, with the previous Tir Cymen programme, that the Countryside Council for Wales appeared to have succeeded in getting farmers to buy into the idea in a way, perhaps, that has not succeeded afterwards. That was in relation to the way that the Countryside Council for Wales has sought to encourage farmers to take an interest and to understand what was happening. Do you think that there are lessons to be learnt from that as well?

[79] **Alun Davies:** Roedd gwers i'w dysgu o hynny, ond nid wyf yn siŵr y

**Alun Davies:** There were lessons to be learnt from that, but I am not sure that I would

buaswn yn cytuno â'r dadansoddiad nad yw hynny'n digwydd yn awr. Mae'n digwydd ar hyn o bryd ac mae'n digwydd mewn ffyrdd gwahanol. Os edrychwch ar yr hyn sydd wedi digwydd gyda thir comin, er enghraifft, ar draws Cymru, mae mwy o bobl yn prynu i mewn i syniadaeth wahanol erbyn hyn na sydd wedi gwneud erioed. Mae hynny'n enghraifft o bobl yn dod at ei gilydd. Un peth sy'n bwysig gyda'r hyn sy'n digwydd gyda thiroedd comin ar draws Cymru yw bod pobl wedi dod at ei gilydd ac wedi cytuno ar ffordd o reoli'r tir comin mewn ffordd gynaliadwy.

agree with your analysis that that is not happening now. It is happening now and it happens in different ways. If you look at what has happened with common land across Wales, for example, there are more people buying into a different mindset now than has been the case at any other time. That is an example of people coming together. One thing that is important in terms of what is happening with common land across Wales is that people have come together and agreed on a way of managing that common land in a sustainable way.

10:15

[80] Rwy'n credu bod hynny yn enghraifft arall o rywbeth y gallwn ni barhau i'w ddatblygu. Felly, mae sawl enghraifft, rwy'n credu, o bethau sydd wedi llwyddo a byddwn i'n cytuno â'r enghraifft rydych chi wedi ei chynnig i ni. Ond, ni fyddwn yn dweud nad oes enghreifftiau gwahanol presennol o'r hyn all ddigwydd hefyd.

I believe that that is another example of something that we can continue to develop. So, there are a number of examples, I believe, in terms of what has been successful and I would agree with the example that you have put forward. However, I would not say that there are no other current examples of what can happen as well.

[81] **William Powell:** Minister, I know that you have taken a keen interest in several projects that I am aware of, including the Pontbren initiative and also the Wye and Usk Foundation, the launch of which you recently presided over, and the work that they do in terms of encouraging responsible environmental practice and sharing that knowledge is admirable. Do you think that there is more that the Welsh Government could do to roll that out and share that greater understanding across the country? You said that there has to be a pragmatic approach and a realisation that one size does not fit all, but that, across Wales, there are really strong examples of good practice. I wonder whether you feel that there is more that we could do to share that more effectively.

[82] **Alun Davies:** Yes, I think that there probably is. I think that you are absolutely right in both of those examples—Pontbren and the Wye and Usk Foundation. I know that we had a conversation at the foundation's offices some months ago and I know that you very much welcomed the work that we were doing to develop and enhance the RDP. We were there in order to deliver on some of those issues. May I say this: the two examples that you give, which I think are good examples, of course, are examples where the Government has not actually led? They are examples of where people have gone at it and said, 'This is a good structure; this works for us', and where the Government has supported that and facilitated that. I would not want to be in some sort of corporatist environment where the Government does everything, all the thinking, all the implementation, all the management and all that sort of stuff. I think that we have got to trust people a lot more, and we have got to work with the grain of what is happening in terms of land management, and river management in terms of the Wye and Usk. Certainly, the work that Stephen Marsh-Smith and others are doing in those river systems has been a tremendous job in ensuring that we have a better natural environment, better sustainable management of those water catchment areas and the economic benefit to the areas concerned, and they also have improved the biodiversity of those watercourses and the whole catchment areas. So, I think that that is a great example of how people can take control of the management of natural resources in a particular area and deliver—

[83] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I am going to cut you short there; you were going well, but I turn to Joyce Watson.

[84] **Joyce Watson:** I want to bring us to talk about ecosystems and ecosystems management, and I want to particularly ask you, Minister, about your proposals for the next RDP or rural development plan, and the way that that is going to support the delivery of ecosystems services by land managers in Wales.

[85] **Alun Davies:** Okay. Kevin Austin has very kindly given me the 6,000 pages-worth of responses to the RDP consultation for me to read over the next bank holiday weekend. When I have had an opportunity to do that, we will take decisions on how we take those proposals forward. Clearly, with the European elections taking place, we will not be making any announcements before 22 May, but what I will be doing over the next month is considering the debates that we have had and the responses that we have had to the consultation. May I say this, and I think that it is an important point to make: the response to the RDP consultation has been extraordinarily positive? It has been very positive. I have held meetings with small groups of people, officials have led stakeholder engagement, and I have held a series of farmers' meetings. Several hundreds of people—farmers, mainly—gathered together in Glynllifon for the last meeting, near the Chair's home, and it was an extraordinarily positive meeting, at which people were saying, 'Right, we want to invest in our businesses; we want to see our businesses succeed'—exactly in the way that Bill Powell has outlined in this meeting—'What can we do, working with you, to deliver that sort of investment?' I spoke to a dairy farmer in Ruthin who was concerned about renewable energy and that he would have support to deliver renewable energy on his dairy farm. Someone in the Chair's constituency was concerned to improve the way that he does lambing and wanted to renew some of the on-farm infrastructure to enable that. There are other people who want support and help with flock management, herd management, health, welfare and animal husbandry issues. So, there has been a huge debate about how we can do that. My responsibility now is to ensure that we deliver on the proposals that we have made, and on the ambitions that we have outlined. I will be taking decisions on this over the next month and I will be communicating those decisions to the National Assembly as soon as they are made. However, in terms of where we are going on all of that and the reason why I say that in the preamble is that the provision of ecosystems services and the sustainability of the sector are absolutely essential to that. That will underpin and hardwire all of the other decisions that we take.

[86] **Joyce Watson:** Like you were asked previously, have you discussed with your ministerial colleagues the way that they can equally support ecosystems management?

[87] **Alun Davies:** We have had this conversation within the Government, both with officials and with Ministers. The conversation that I had yesterday with Carl Sargeant was very much about how the planning Bill and the environment Bill will mesh together to ensure that we deliver natural resource management sustainability through both those different pieces of legislation. My concern as well is that we also invest in the development of new opportunities to deliver on ecosystems management—things that we have not done in the past, one of which, of course, is payment for ecosystems services. The work that I am currently undertaking with Edwina Hart in terms of green growth and the green economy is about how we develop those opportunities for people to actually derive income sources from sustainable natural resource management. That is why I tried to be quite strong in my response to Bill Powell's earlier question about whether we have a choice between an ecosystems management approach and food production. If you look at the uplands of Wales, for example, you are going to be looking at a financial model that underpins agriculture there that is simply not based on the production of food because the production of food does not provide a sustainable financial model for that business. It has to deliver something else as well in order to have that business sustainability. The delivery of ecosystems services is

potentially about the way in which we can secure and underpin the future of agriculture in the uplands.

[88] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Julie James.

[89] **Julie James:** I have just a quick follow-up question, actually, to what the Minister was talking about there. We have had a mass of evidence, obviously, on this business about ecosystems and the potential for payment and how you might develop a market. I will not go through all of the stuff. Minister, you are very well aware of Natural Resources Wales's responsibilities for doing that, but one of the things that I worry about slightly is that we have missed the potential for some of the other Government agencies, like local authorities, to pay for ecosystems services in that new market. So, for example, in a conversation about invasive and non-native species, a lot of local authorities take a lot of time and money to do remediation; we have a massive Japanese knotweed problem in Swansea, for example, and the council spends huge amounts of money trying to remediate, but, as far as I know, very little or absolutely no money is given towards talking to landowners and managers further up the river catchment area of the Tawe, for example, who are exacerbating the problem of the spread of that species. It is about trying to develop markets where money is being spent on remediation and where you might be able to filter some of that money into prevention and/or land management in a different way, which would promote the sort of ecosystems response that we are talking about. It is only a narrow point, really, about how to develop that market in the minds of people who have some money that they are spending on the results of bad management, if you like.

[90] **Alun Davies:** I would not agree that it is a narrow point. I think that it is a fundamental point about creating those linkages between the buyers and sellers, if you like, in the marketplace and creating a structure whereby that market can operate. Members will be aware that I have commissioned work on this matter. My officials have received an initial report and I have seen that initial report. We are currently working on that with the consultants who provided the report to us. I hope to be in a position to publish that in the next few months. When we do so I want to also start a fresh debate, if you like, on exactly the point you made about creating linkages—upstream and downstream linkages—between people who have ecosystems services they wish to sell and those who wish to buy those services. I think that that is exactly the sort of approach that we need to take. I hope that we have not missed the bus on this one. I do not think we have, as it happens. I think that we have an opportunity to do this. We have some of the levers that we require at our disposal at present, but I think that we probably need to create a more structured approach, which we do not have at the moment. I am hoping that the research that I will be able to publish in the not too distant future will provide us with pointers towards creating those structures.

[91] **Alun Ffred Jones:** In the few minutes we have left, as we have not touched at all on knowledge transfer, I want to just get a couple of questions in on that. One of the comments made is that we need to improve the way that knowledge is transferred to land managers from experts and from centres of excellence in Wales. Do you have any comments on that?

[92] **Alun Davies:** Yes, I think that is right, actually. We do not actually acknowledge the good things that are happening at the moment here. Look at the KITE system, the food knowledge transfer programme, that we have for some of the food production. There is some great knowledge transfer going on at the moment, and sometimes we sort of skate over that without fully recognising it. Some of the Farming Connect farmers' groups, for example, are actually making a huge difference to the profitability and efficiency of individual farm businesses at the moment. So, there is a great deal of work going on at the moment that is delivering those efficiencies and that knowledge as we speak. So, I think that we need to recognise that.



[93] However, going forward, one of the things that I recognise in exactly the way you describe, Chair, is the fact that we have great amounts of knowledge available to us but we do not always have the linkages to ensure that people are able to access that knowledge easily. I have asked Professor Wynne Jones—Members may be aware that I have made a statement on this work, which Ken Skates, the Deputy Minister, and I are jointly sponsoring—to look at the work that is going on in our agricultural colleges and our higher education institutions and to look at how we can link that work together, strengthen that work and then create linkages out to the industry as well. So, there are a number of different areas at the moment that we are examining and where I hope we will be able to make some significant proposals, both as part of the new rural development plan and possibly on the more domestic side later in the year.

[94] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Antoinette Sandbach.

[95] **Antoinette Sandbach:** A lot of stakeholders commented that NRW should be leading the way and becoming the exemplar of best practice on the land it owns and manages. What is your view on that?

[96] **Alun Davies:** Yes. Clearly, that is self-evidently true. I do follow some of these debates and I think that, sometimes, people say, ‘NRW should be doing this, NRW should be doing that, NRW should be doing something else’ as though there were 1,000 NRWs with all the resources to do everything we might wish all of the time everywhere. I think that our expectations of NRW can sometimes be unrealistic. However, in terms of what it does on its own estate, clearly, it has primary responsibility for that estate and it should be managing its resources in the way that it expects others to manage theirs.

[97] **Antoinette Sandbach:** Obviously, Wales has a massive asset in the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences, and there have been comments that we should be, as it were, technologically ahead of the curve because we have that asset located here in Wales. What is your view on Professor Jamie Newbold’s observations that demonstration farms should be demonstrating technology fit for 2030?

[98] **Alun Davies:** I do not have any strong views; I think that it is self-evidently the case. One of the reasons I tried to put together with IBERS the package on Pwllpeiran was to create an uplands research centre that was unique across the European Union. I think that we have something that is close to that now. The work that Wayne Powell did before he left I thought put IBERS not only on the national and European stages, but on the international stage. I think that he should be warmly congratulated on his leadership in doing that. Talking to the vice-chancellor and Wayne at Aberystwyth, we put together a package that created Pwllpeiran exactly to provide the uplands knowledge and research that we require. That is why I was so anxious to be able to do it. That is why I launched that back in January. My expectation now is that we will begin to see the results of that.

10:30

[99] What I am very anxious to do—. You know, I believe in education for education’s sake—I am an old-fashioned, traditional person who believes that the value of education is in an educated and civilised society. I think that it is absolutely essential for us. Also, however, we need to apply education; we need to apply that research and apply the knowledge that we have available to us. So, yes, we have to do the research and have that pure research base, which I think is essential. We have to link up with our European friends, so that we use the structures of the European Union in a positive way in order to link up with, and learn from, people and our friends on the European mainland and elsewhere in order to create new knowledge, but we need to apply that knowledge, and this is one of the reasons I have asked Professor Wynne Jones to look at how we can apply that knowledge on individual funds and with individual farm managers.

[100] **Antoinette Sandbach:** Given—

[101] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Un cwestiwn eto. **Alun Ffred Jones:** One more question.

[102] This is your last question.

[103] **Antoinette Sandbach:** Sorry. Given that need to apply that knowledge, and the fact that a lot of knowledge transfer is between farmers, what are you looking at, again in Glastir, or perhaps outside Glastir, to encourage farms that are not academic farms—that is, they are not Pwllpeiran—but are in the community, to adopt what I would call 2030 technologies?

[104] **Mr Austin:** As the Minister said, he will be making a statement after Whitsun in response to the Glastir consultation responses. So, I do not want to say too much, but we will be putting proposals forward in terms of the level of facilitation and training that goes together with Glastir. I think that part of the package will include the opportunity for farmer-to-farmer training and farmer-to-farmer mentoring, because there are many exemplar farmers out there who are in a position to really help other farmers to deliver genuine, sustainable land management, and that is certainly part of the future as we see it for Glastir.

[105] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Hoffwn ddiolch i chi, Weinidog, a'ch swyddogion am ddod draw. Mae'r sylwadau ynglŷn â Phwllpeiran yn teimlo tipyn bach fel *Back to the Future*, achos dyna yn union yr oedd Pwllpeiran yn ei wneud yn y 1930au a'r 1940au pan wnaeth gyfraniad anferthol i amaethyddiaeth Cymru, gan newid llawer iawn o arferion a chodi safonau. Felly, diolch yn fawr iawn i chi, ac rwy'n ymddiheuro na roddais gyfle i chi gyflwyno eich swyddogion ar y dechrau—mi ddof i arfer â'r job hwn cyn bo hir. Felly, diolch yn fawr iawn i chi am eich sylwadau'r bore yma.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I thank you, Minister, and your officials for coming here this morning. The comments regarding Pwllpeiran feel a little bit like *Back to the Future*: that is exactly what they were doing when it made its massive contribution in the 1930s and 1940s, which changed many features of agriculture and raised standards. I am very grateful to you for coming here, and I apologise for not inviting you to introduce your officials—I will get used to the job soon. So, thank you very much for your comments this morning.

10:33

### **Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note**

[106] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae'r papurau sydd ger eich bron yn cynnwys papur yn ymwneud â'r ymchwiliad i gynigion Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer yr M4 ger Casnewydd—yr ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad a chyngor cyfreithiol Cyfeillion y Ddaear. Papur i'w nodi ydyw, ond rwy'n credu efallai fod Mick Antoniw am ddweud rhywbeth.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** The papers before you include a paper relating to the inquiry into the Welsh Government's proposals for the M4 around Newport—Friends of the Earth's consultation response and legal advice. It is a paper to note, but I think that Mick Antoniw perhaps wants to say something.

[107] **Mick Antoniw:** Chair, I know that we are just noting this, and, obviously, there has been difficulty around this matter, because although we have taken some evidence and have not yet completed our work, we did raise a number of queries with the Minister, who did respond, about the nature of the consultation process. Of course, there is a difficulty insofar as the Minister has been reluctant to give evidence with the consultation under way. The paper

highlights, I think, some of the issues that we will be concerned with, to do with changes in the consultation process, and we did have a response that sort of dealt with some of those issues. I think that it would be appropriate, however, to at least get some clarification from the Minister about what the stage of the consultation process actually is now, because it seems to have gone through a number of different processes, including one in which the blue route was excluded, and then, almost as the consultation is concluding, including it. It seems to me that, as part of our scrutiny role, we should at least have a clear understanding as to what the current state of the consultation process is and what the process is going to be. I think that the Minister should be able to provide that without creating any problem over the consultation itself. However, it would be helpful to know that when we go on to our next stages of evidence in this area.

[108] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. I think we accept that. I do not want to prolong this, but Antoinette has a question.

[109] **Antoinette Sandbach:** I just want to make a very short echoing of support. I think it is important for the Minister to come before this committee to answer questions on, perhaps not the ongoing consultation process, but what has happened previously. There are several stages that have been concluded in relation to the M4 that we could properly question her on. I am concerned that the Minister is avoiding scrutiny by not coming to this committee and answering questions. There will be a series of ongoing consultations in relation to the M4 and I think she needs to come and answer questions on those matters that have already concluded.

[110] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, let us ask for clarification, to begin with, and we will see where we go from there. Julie, did you have a comment?

[111] **Julie Morgan:** Just to say that I support what Mick says, and I think that if we could go ahead with that—. However, could you tell us who else we are taking evidence from now? Have we got people planned?

[112] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, I know nothing.

[113] **Mr Davidson:** The plan is as discussed just before Easter. The Research Service has been busy pulling together a key issues paper that summarises the evidence that has been taken to date, and there is an opportunity next week to have a discussion about that and to make a decision about next steps. So, that is where we are.

[114] **Julie James:** I also support what Mick has said, but I do not support what Antoinette has just said, though, I have to say. I do not think that the Minister is avoiding scrutiny in any way. I think that we should write and ask for the clarification that Mick has outlined. I do not think that remarks made in open committee about the Minister avoiding scrutiny are very helpful in the circumstances.

[115] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Right, well, since this was a paper to note, I would prefer not to take a—.

[116] **Joyce Watson:** I just want on the record to equally say that I do not concur with Antoinette Sandbach's statement that a Minister of this Government is trying to avoid scrutiny.

[117] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. We will write to the Minister to ask for further clarification and next week we will make a decision on how we proceed further with this issue. Diolch yn fawr iawn—thank you very much.

10:37

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r  
Cyfarfod**  
**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the  
Meeting**

[118] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Would any Member like to move the motion?

[119] **William Powell:** I move that

*the committee resolves to exclude the public for items 5, 6 and 7 in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).*

[120] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10:37.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 10:37.*