

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
NRW 2015 – 50
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015
Response from West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre and
South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre

9th April 2015

In response to your request for the views of stakeholders and their recent relationship with Natural Resources Wales, there are a few points I would like to make on behalf of our organisations.

The period of transition has caused some difficulties as staff with whom a long standing relationship had been built up had changed roles, or left the organisation. It is to the credit of certain staff members that they have worked with us through this obviously challenging time to maintain continuity of our agreements and service provision, albeit with some changes to this and the funding amounts we receive.

Members of NRW staff with a direct relationship and understanding of the services we provide are our principal contacts when it comes to payment for our services. We understand that recent changes to NRW internal finance arrangements have caused difficulties in late payment and there has been no explanation for this. These changes appear to have distanced us in the process and there is a lack of clarity about who to approach when invoices, for amounts that can be critical to our small business, are not paid in the expected time. It seems inefficient that officers with other responsibilities than finance, should have to be badgered for unpaid invoices. Communication and a good dialogue are essential to maintaining good relationships not only at the strategic level as this consultation process seeks to achieve, but also in our business dealings with NRW.

It was stated by Welsh Government at the Making the Best of Wales Natural Resources Conference in 2013 that one of the reasons for the need for change to natural resource management was that evidence was being used inconsistently by decision makers. We are keen that developments to our service to bring together biodiversity data for all Wales and to streamline its delivery into our partners' systems are widely utilised by NRW. These developments were begun under our agreements with the legacy bodies, are largely now in place, and we have sought the opportunity to demonstrate how they can enhance the service we provide and better inform officers of the new organisation. We look forward to our relationship with NRW further developing and continuing long into the future.

Colin Russell, Manager, WWBIC
Adam Rowe, Manager, SEWBReC