

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-537  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00588/15

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

23 April 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter regarding the above. The Welsh Government is aware that flood risk management is not only about building defences and we have set out a range of approaches in our National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, including making more use of the natural environment.

The Welsh Government intends to provide support for tree planting, woodland restoration and management as part of the Glastir woodland scheme through the new Rural Development Plan (RDP) programme. Good progress has been made on the RDP/Glastir forestry proposals which are potentially very significant. We have not as yet, received formal confirmation from the EU in this respect but subject to my formal agreement, I would anticipate a launch for expressions of interest in May for those who can complete planting in 2015/2016.

Support for woodland creation will be based on a revised woodland opportunities map which is nearly ready and will be released as part of the rollout of RDP Glastir later this year. The map has been re-engineered to address the concerns of stakeholders that were raised during the consultation. It has been redesigned from a constraints-driven map where no trees can be planted in certain areas to an opportunities map focussing on where trees can be planted. Whilst still recognising sensitivities and constraints, UK Forestry Standard and national resource management planning principles will be followed that are consistent with an ecosystems approach.

The Welsh Government continues to work on ways in which woodland creation can be expanded, such as through our Plant! project which aims to plant a tree for every child born or adopted in Wales. Since its launch in 2007, 200,000 native broadleaf trees have been planted on 8 sites across Wales and we continue to support its delivery by Natural Resources Wales in partnership with Coed Cadw.

In summary therefore, I confirm that the Welsh Government is fully committed to increasing woodland creation and woodland management, as stated in our Wales Forestry Strategy '*Woodlands for Wales*'. Woodlands can provide a full range of ecosystem services and benefits which make a sustainable contribution to society as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Carl Sargeant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'C'.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources