

FWP 21

Ymateb gan : Unigolyn
Evidence from : Individual

1. **Regarding “responding to climate change – coping with climate change and helping reduce our carbon footprint;”**

The Assembly is clearly falling far short of its target to double the area of woodland in Wales by 2050. Very little new woodland is being planted but meanwhile where trees are naturally regenerating as grazing levels are reduced, land owners are encouraged to remove them in order to keep the land in “Good agricultural and environmental condition”. There may be opportunities for small and even large scale woodland creation by natural processes (natural re-generation) on less used agricultural land, at nil cost to the Welsh taxpayer, by simply changing the regulations which specify maintenance of agricultural condition by private owners. The policies and incentives currently in place don’t sufficiently incentive new woodland planting and they actually prevent natural processes from increasing the area of woodland for us.

2. **Regarding “making a positive contribution to biodiversity, landscapes and heritage, and reducing other environmental pressures.”**

Large scale conifer blocks do not make much of a contribution to either biodiversity (being non-native), landscape or heritage. The large conifer blocks are still largely being restocked as they were in the first rotation, which is repeating the mistakes of the large scale planting in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Forest design plans should balance commercial conifers with long-term thinking to provide more native woodland (and commercial hardwoods) Welsh Government should consider allocating one large upland parcel for radical restructuring for a much greater environmental benefit – resulting in a predominately broadleaf habitat, which could be at least partially achieved with natural regeneration and which could form a vital part of a landscape level habitat restoration initiative which is being developed in the Northern Cambrian Mountains.

3. **Regarding reporting progress against the action plan**

The information provided by the minister is a list of activities being undertaken, it doesn’t constitute an evaluation of whether each target has been met or not which makes it hard to comment on. I would like to see an assessment of whether progress and achievements are considered inadequate, adequate or exemplary in each category.