



Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Climate Change, Environment, and Rural Affairs Committee

8 December 2020

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 23 November regarding the Interim arrangements for environmental governance following the end of the Implementation Period.

Task Group's proposals for interim measures and Response to these proposals

You have requested a copy of the Environmental Governance Stakeholder Task Group report on Interim Measures submitted in October 2019. The Task Group produced a paper on the permanent arrangement. This has been published, along with my response at: <https://gov.wales/response-report-environmental-governance-stakeholder-task-group>, as I committed to doing when I appeared at CCERA.

The Task Group also considered options for potential interim measures specifically in response to the anticipated no deal EU exit at the end of October 2019. Officials produced a document with this input which recommended a phased approach for interim measures. This report informed Ministerial advice I received in October 2019. I agreed, as stated in my decision report at the time, to 'a phased approach to developing environmental governance arrangements for Wales and for an initial interim complaints mechanism to be enacted in the event of a no-deal EU exit from the EU on 31 October'. The Task Group itself did not produce a report.

The interim arrangements considered at this time were stood down due to the fact a no-deal EU exit did not occur and attention then focused on working towards clarifying and finalising the permanent post EU exit environmental governance arrangements for Wales.

Question 3 and 4 Detailed Explanation of the Interim Complaints system and additional interim measures to beyond complaints mechanism to address the governance gap

Interim measures will be phased in from 1 January 2021.

Initially there will be a website and mechanism to raise concerns around the functioning of environmental law. An interim assessor will be appointed to consider the concerns and conduct wider systemic reviews in relation to the functioning of environmental law. Where the assessor considers it appropriate to do so, further evidence and/or expert advice may be sought as part of a reporting process.

It is important to note these arrangements are only intended to be temporary. It is my intention the interim measures help lay the foundations for, and assist development of, our permanent response. My officials will be working with stakeholders to develop thinking with the aim to bring forward a White Paper on the permanent arrangements after the Senedd election next May.

Further steps may then be taken to strengthen the interim arrangements, alongside the development of a shadow body ahead of the legislation being laid and establishment of the new body in law.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs