



RECEIVED
26 MAR 2015

RSPB Cymru

Darren Miller AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Darren,

RSPB Cymru would like to congratulate the Committee on its inquiry into Glastir. We believe that the recommendations, if fully implemented, will make a significant contribution towards improving the effectiveness of the scheme in securing greater change in management at participating farms, tackling poor practice and securing better value for money for taxpayers.

Welsh Government maintains that Glastir is its main tool for achieving environmental enhancements in the wider countryside, essential if Wales is to meet its targets for water, climate change and halting the loss of nature. As such we welcome the recommendation that Welsh Government should ensure participation in Glastir Advanced provides genuine improvement in agri-environmental practices and enhancements of the natural environment, and does not merely reinforce existing practice.

We also welcome the recommendation that Welsh Government should report back to the Committee by autumn 2015 on the challenging, but realistic, targets it has set for the uptake of Glastir, including the budgets to which the targets are aligned.

As Glastir is Welsh Government's main means of achieving environmental restoration and protection within the farmed landscape we ask that the Committee extends its consideration of targets beyond scheme uptake and to request that Welsh Government provides details on the extent of change that Glastir is expected to achieve e.g. how much will the scheme contribute to the delivery of Water Framework Directive targets and halting the declines of farmland wildlife?

This approach would be in line with recommendations in the Auditor General for Wales report on Glastir (September 2014) which stated that:

"The Welsh Government should review its targets for Glastir to ensure an adequate evidence base to support each target, and to ensure that the targets are challenging yet achievable, affordable and **reflect the scale of change the Welsh Government is expecting the scheme to deliver.**"

Pencadlys Cymru

Ty Sutherland
Pont y Castell
Heol Ddwyreiniol y Bont-faen
Caerdydd
CF11 9AB

Wales Headquarters

Sutherland House
Castlebridge
Cowbridge Road East
Cardiff
CF11 9AB

Ffôn/tel 029 2035 3000
Ffacs/fax 029 2035 3017

rspb.org.uk



Mae'r RSPB yn aelodi o BirdLife International, partneriaeth o gyffwrdd cadiwraeth sy'n gweithio i sicrhau cartref i fydd natur o amgylch y byd.
The RSPB is a member of BirdLife International, a partnership of conservation organisations working to give nature a home around the world.

The EU's recent response to the Welsh Government's submission of the 2014-2020 Welsh Rural Development Plan¹ also highlights the need for Welsh Government to quantify the scale of environmental improvement, including benefits for nature that the RDP will make. Observations from Europe include:

"It should be clarified to what extent the RDP will help fulfil the obligations and goals of Natura 2000", and

"In relation to the EU biodiversity strategy, Wales has targets and outcomes to which the RDP can contribute. There is an opportunity to include elements for the promotion of biodiversity in the Forestry Management Plans (FMPs), and accordingly bring about a measurable improvement in the conservation status of species and habitats that depend on or are affected by forestry, in the provision of related ecosystem services. The Welsh authorities are invited to provide more detail on how the FMPs will contribute to the targets of the biodiversity strategy".

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to participate in the inquiry and to offer any further assistance that RSPB Cymru can provide in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Arfon Williams

Countryside Manager RSPB Cymru

¹ Observations on the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 "UK Wales – Rural Development Programme"
CCI.2014UK06RDRP004