

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-941
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/02480/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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Dear Janet Finch-Saunders

29th October 2020

Thank you for your letter of 12 October, regarding Petition P-05-941 Biodiversity remit for Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

My officials work with NRW to regularly review their financial and delivery pressures, along with funding opportunities. In addition to Grant in Aid (GiA) funding, NRW is in receipt of commercial income. Their full budget for last year was £183m, as set out in their Annual Report and Accounts for 2018-19.

Whilst NRW received a reduction of £7.5m to their core GiA funding for 2020-21 only, this was in response to the WG re-allocating budgets due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As with all public funding, NRW must demonstrate evidence of need to draw down any GiA claimed from the WG. In my regular meetings with the Chair and Chief Executive of NRW they keep me apprised of the ongoing impact on their finances and resources. Following formal review of their budget forecast, my officials will discuss NRW's requirements and consider any requests for extra funding.

NRW also receives additional grant funding from different parts of WG, year on year, for projects which are outside their GiA. In 2020-21, the WG secured substantial capital reserves to deliver our environmental agenda through improvements to water quality, enhancing biodiversity and restoring peat. To progress this agenda, NRW have received additional funding of £2.8m for Natura 2000, £1.135m for the National Peat Action Programme and another £1m for essential reservoir maintenance.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In May 2020, I issued a Remit Letter outlining the objectives for NRW to deliver in 2020-21, including on halting and reversing biodiversity decline. In particular, I have asked NRW to make strides to restore its own Natura 2000 sites and to take forward the planned programme for restoration of degraded peatlands to create healthy functioning wet bogs. Alongside this, I have asked NRW to work with WG in promoting a programme of engagement, awareness raising and effective biosecurity practices, to minimise the impact of plant pests and diseases and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) outbreaks.

Other than grant funding, it is for NRW to decide how they spend their budget, including resource allocation. My previous correspondence outlined how delivery of biodiversity outcomes is embedded across the delivery of all of their functions. Operational decisions about delivery of these outcomes is the responsibility of NRW.

Yours Sincerely



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