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

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LG/02291/20

Liz Smith

Liz@waleslink.org

Dear Liz Smith

6th October 2020

Thank you for your letter of 15 September, regarding the publication of the Global Biodiversity Outlook Report. I am responding on behalf of the First Minister.

As a Government we have acknowledged the escalating nature emergency, and that we, along with the rest of the UK and the world, have failed to make enough progress against the global targets, and the outcome of reversing the decline in biodiversity.

As you say, Wales is a world leader in embedding the ecosystem approach into legislation through the publication of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) and Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Although we are now in a much better position to take a whole government approach to tackling biodiversity loss than we were at the beginning of the last decade, we need to step up our action now.

We are beginning to truly embed biodiversity consideration across government in line with our Natural Resources Policy, the Nature Recovery Action Plan and our section 6 biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, most notably through the budgeting process.

Although progress has been hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic, we are committed to a green and just recovery, which honours our commitments to tackle the climate emergency and reverse the decline in biodiversity. The refreshed Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP) for 2020-21 restates our commitment to action for biodiversity, particularly for Wales wide resilient ecological networks, and for transformative action to influence behaviour and investment decisions to ensure we maintain and enhance biodiversity.

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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.

As part of our work to deliver the NRAP a suite of indicators and success measures will be developed to assess our progress in meeting the objectives of the plan, and in reversing the decline in biodiversity. This will include measures relating to resilient ecological networks, habitats and species within and outside of protected sites, addressing negative pressures, as well as measures of transformative action, such as improving our evidence and knowledge, innovative resourcing and capacity building.

The measures will be aligned with the post 2020 Monitoring and Indicator Framework for the next decade of biodiversity action, and my officials are currently working with the UK biodiversity framework, the sub-national regions and governments and the Convention on Biological Diversity to develop these ambitious global indicators and targets.

The Natural Resources Policy sets out the Welsh Ministers' priorities over a 5 year cycle, for everyone across Wales to take action. It clearly sets out how Wales is committed to sustainably tackling the climate emergency and the decline in biodiversity. The first Natural Resources Policy was published in 2017. A snapshot report[1] published earlier this year set out the action Welsh Government has taken 2 years into this first cycle, including the delivery of nature-based solutions to address both climate change and biodiversity loss. It also contributes to the report on what Welsh Government has done to comply with the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Natural Resources Policy will develop and evolve to address new challenges and opportunities we face as a nation and importantly as global citizens.

Wales is a key partner and contributor in the Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the development of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework. I will continue to support the call for action upon the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to take bold and strong action to bring about transformative change as well as recognising the role of subnational governments, cities and local authorities in delivering this ambition. We are also working with Defra on the Leaders Pledge for Nature to ensure it delivers action towards achieving the 2030 targets.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to developing biodiversity policy for Wales and beyond. I look forward to continuing to work with you in delivering the NRAP and the Environment (Wales) Act framework.

Regards



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Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

[1] https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/implementation-of-the-natural-resources-policy-snapshot-report.pdf