

Alun Davidson
Clerk, Environment and Sustainability Committee,
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

13 January 2014

Dear Alun,

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE – 12 DECEMBER 2013

I am responding to comments made by Gareth Clubb of Friends of the Earth at the Committee meeting on 12 December 2013 (p22, col 140, of draft transcript). The draft transcript quotes him saying:

'[NRW] in its current form is not competent [to take into account economic and social considerations]. There is no expertise in terms of economics or sociology. There is no single individual employed at present by NRW, as far as I know, who has the specific expertise to be able to provide advice in those areas. So the question could arise as to whether this is a bid to expand the NRW empire It is not the role of NRW to give an opinion that would include economic and social issues.'

The purpose of Natural Resources Wales is set out in the establishment order (The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) Order 2012). It states the purpose of Natural Resources Wales is to ensure that the environment and natural resources of Wales are:

- (a) sustainably maintained;
- (b) sustainably enhanced; and
- (c) sustainably used.

(2) In this article -

- (a) "sustainably" ("yn gynaliadwy") means -
 - (i) with a view to benefiting, and
 - (ii) in a manner designed to benefit, the people, environment and economy of Wales in the present and in the future;
- (b) "environment" ("amgylchedd") includes, without limitation, living organisms and ecosystems.

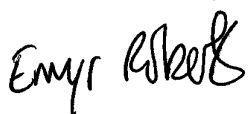
The statutory purpose of Natural Resources Wales, therefore requires a balance to be struck and not to ascribe weight to any aspect (e.g. the environment or the economy) in preference to another. Indeed, the basis upon which the provision is drafted requires the environment and any natural resources to be sustainably

used, enhanced and maintained. This requires a judgement to be reached (for example on individual planning applications) on whether those objectives are met.

In response to the statement: "There is no expertise in terms of economics or sociology. There is no single individual employed at present by NRW, as far as I know, who has the specific expertise to be able to provide advice in those areas", we currently employ a senior economist, an economist, and a sociologist. We also procure specialist advice in these fields from University experts and consultants as and when required.

I would be grateful if you could draw this matter to the Committee's attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emyr Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

EMYR ROBERTS

Prif Weithredwr, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales

emyr.roberts@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Natural Resources Wales,
Ty Cambria, Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TP

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Ty Cambria, Heol Casnewydd, Caerdydd CF24 0TP