



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd **The Environment and Sustainability Committee**

Dydd Mercher, 6 Mai 2015
Wednesday, 6 May 2015

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mick Antoniw	Llafur Labour
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Llyr Gruffydd	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan	Llafur Labour
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Yr Athro/Professor Peter Matthews	Cadeirydd, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Chair, Natural Resources Wales
Dr Emyr Roberts	Prif Weithredwr, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Alun Davidson	Clerc Clerk
Peter Hill	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Nia Seaton	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Chris Warner	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:32.
The meeting began at 09:32.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A gaf i **Alun Ffred Jones:** May I welcome all the groesawu'r Aelodau i gyd yma? A oes Members here? Are there any apologies? ymddiheuriad?

[2] Russell is on his way.

[3] A gaf eich croesawu chi yma, y ddau May I welcome you here, both of you, on ohonoch chi, ar ran Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru? behalf of Natural Resources Wales? I'll just Fe wnaif i jest redeg drwy rai o'r manylion. run through some of the details. If there is a

Os bydd larwm tân, dilynwch yr ystlyswyr allan. Pawb i ddiffodd eu ffonau symudol. Rydym yn gweithredu'n ddwyieithog, wrth gwrs, ac mae clustffonau ar gael; mae cyfieithiadau ar sianel 1. Croeso i unrhyw un gyfrannu yn Gymraeg neu'n Saesneg. Peidiwch â chyffwrdd â'r botymau ar eich meicroffonau. A oes unrhyw un sydd eisiau datgan buddiant o dan Reol Sefydlog 2.6? Na. Mae ymddiheuriadau gan Antoinette Sandbach; nid yw Mohammad Asghar yn dirprwyo, felly.

fire alarm, please follow the ushers out of the building. Everybody to switch off their mobile phones. We operate bilingually, of course, and headphones are available; the simultaneous translation is on channel 1. You are more than welcome to contribute in Welsh or English. Please don't touch the buttons on the microphones. Does anybody want to declare an interest under Standing Order 2.6? No. There are apologies from Antoinette Sandbach; Mohammad Asghar is not substituting, therefore.

09:33

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru: Craffu Blynyddol 2015 **Natural Resources Wales: Annual Scrutiny**

[4] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Symudwn ymlaen felly, i'r ail eitem, sef craffu ar waith Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru, a chroesawaf y prif weithredwr a'r cadeirydd atom y bore yma. Mae gwaith Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn eithriadol o bwysig i bob rhan o Gymru, wrth gwrs, ac i waith y Llywodraeth yma. Rydym yn ddiolchgar iawn ichi am ddod gerbron. Efallai y byddwn i jest yn gofyn ichi, er mwyn y record, gyflwyno'ch hunain a dweud beth yw eich rôl o fewn y corff, os gwelwch yn dda.

Alun Ffred Jones: We move on to item 2, which is the scrutiny of Natural Resources Wales, and I welcome the chief executive and the chair to the meeting this morning. The work of Natural Resources Wales is extremely important to every part of Wales, of course, and to the Government's work. We are very grateful to you for coming before us this morning. I may just ask you to introduce yourselves for the record and to explain your role within the organisation, please.

[5] **Dr Roberts:** Emyr Roberts, prif weithredwr Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru.

Dr Roberts: Emyr Roberts, chief executive of Natural Resources Wales.

[6] **Professor Matthews:** I'm Peter Matthews, chairman of Natural Resources Wales.

[7] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn fawr iawn ichi. I ddechrau y bore yma, a gaf i ofyn i Jeff Cuthbert ofyn y cwestiwn cyntaf?

Alun Ffred Jones: Thank you very much. To start this morning, may I ask Jeff Cuthbert to ask the first question?

[8] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning. As you know, this discussion and scrutiny session is against the background of a rather mixed report, shall we say, about Natural Resources Wales. So, could I start off the session by asking you how you see the broad purpose of Natural Resources Wales relating to the statutory obligations that you have at this time? Do you feel, especially in the light of the consultation responses and the staff views, that you have been as clear as possible to your staff about Natural Resources Wales's purpose and obligations? You may want to respond to some of the concerns now expressed by environmental and fishery organisations et cetera, about an apparent loss of focus. And then, in terms of this first question, we have the environment Bill due to come on board soon and the well-being of future generations Bill is now law. What opportunities might there be for you to review your purposes and to have further discussions with the Welsh Government?

[9] **Professor Matthews:** Thank you. It's a very broad-ranging question, or set of questions, that you ask. I'm satisfied that our purpose provides a very broad definition of the role that we are going to play, and are playing, in Team Wales. Within that purpose there are

a number of particular statutory and regulatory responsibilities, which we address. As far as the perception of what we do is concerned, the whole idea of integrated natural resource management is new. In fact, we are global leaders. People are finding it quite difficult to come to terms with. We're working very hard in communications, but what we're trying to do is to explain to people that a particular activity, a particular job or a particular kind of partnership sits within a broader matrix—it sits within natural resources management. It's not that we have lost our focus; it's that the focus on particular activities is now set against a broader framework.

[10] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Could you explain the point that you're following at the moment?

[11] **Professor Matthews:** Well, let me give you an example. In bygone times, for example, we had sites of special scientific interest that were dealt with exclusively just as SSSIs. What we discovered is that the people who dealt with SSSIs in the past never had a dialogue or a conversation with the people in other organisations that were dealing with, for example, catchment plans under the water framework directive. When the water framework directive catchment plans had been formulated, they didn't really take account of protected areas. Just apart from everything else that's going on, just bringing those people together into one team gave a new focus—a new purpose. To put it quite bluntly to you, there have been people in the legacy bodies who have been focused on a very, very, very particular activity. What we're now asking them to do is to say, 'When you're looking at the protection of newts, frogs or whatever it might be, it's not just an activity in its own right; it's got to sit within a broader understanding of what a biodiverse environment looks like'. So, we're asking people to think about the bigger picture.

[12] I'll leave Emyr to carry on the thread of what we're saying, but what I would say to you is that the staff survey to which you refer—and we'd like to confront that right now—was done deliberately at a time when we knew that the staff were probably going to be most uncomfortable because we were bringing in new ideas. We were asking them to move offices and so on. So, we thought that it would be very good for us to measure the degree of comfort of our people at a time when we knew that they were kind of most discombobulated. That gave us a baseline from which we can work. I have to say that, bearing in mind that we've asked our people to think very differently about the jobs that they do, to join new teams, to move offices, to work with new people, anyone would be uncomfortable. I was very pleased that so many of our people had felt comfortable about the direction of travel. It's a disappointment to me that the media have focused on the number of people who felt uncomfortable rather than the number of people who felt comfortable.

[13] **Alun Ffred Jones:** We'll come to the staff survey.

[14] **Professor Matthews:** Well, I think that Mr Cuthbert referred to that.

[15] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes. One of my colleagues will. I just want clarification on one point. You say that the staff survey was done 'deliberately' at a time when staff might feel the most uncomfortable—I think those were your words.

[16] **Professor Matthews:** Yes.

[17] **Jeff Cuthbert:** What do you—? Deliberately.

[18] **Professor Matthews:** Well, it gives us an absolute definition of the baseline from which we have to work. Which organisation would want to do it in such a superficial way that it just gave the best results—to give a glib gloss to what was going on in an organisation? I think, for me, strong, good corporate leadership is about understanding what is going on in an organisation for real, and not in any way that's glossed.

[19] **Jeff Cuthbert:** As the Chair says, I know we're coming onto staff later, but there were other parts to the question.

[20] **Dr Roberts:** Yes. Thank you. Could I just add to that? As the chairman says, I think we have a very broad purpose, and we do have specific statutory responsibilities within that. People are quite familiar with our statutory responsibilities, but what we are doing is trying to manage the natural environment in a way that is sustainable, that has a number of objectives and a number of outcomes, social, economic as well as environmental. It is a new concept, and to help staff to try and understand that, we've produced our road map for the future, which sets out the journey that we're on and what we're trying to achieve as an organisation. We have a programme of work behind that to link, as Peter said, the specific areas that people work on to this broader outcome that we're trying to achieve. We're still on that journey, and, just referring to the staff survey, yes, that did reveal that some people were unclear about the organisational objectives, and we will be addressing that.

[21] What we've also done is worked through a number of policies to bring together all that we do, so that we are consistent and so that we do have a single purpose in mind, and we're working through those as we speak. So, a number of policies have come forward over the past 12 months—discussed internally with my staff so that we all understand what we're trying to do here and the processes behind that. In terms of responses to the consultation, I think that Natural Resources Wales has considerably moved on. Some of the responses to the consultation were very focused on particular interests, and I think we've got engagement to do with those interests to try and explain that we are taking a more holistic view of the environment, rather than dealing with it in a series of silos as, perhaps, the previous organisations did. It's still a journey, it's still work in progress, but that's the direction of travel.

[22] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Cawsom ni randdeiliaid yma, wrth gwrs, yn siarad gyda ni ynglŷn â'u profiad nhw a'u perthynas nhw gyda chi fel corff, ac fe wnaeth Rachel Sharp, cyfarwyddwr Ymddiriodolaethau Natur Cymru, fynegi pryder bod Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn esblygu i ystyried yr amgylchedd fel rhwystr rhag datblygiad economaidd yn hytrach nag elfen alluogi. Beth fydddech chi'n dweud mewn ymateb i'r pryder neu'r cyhuddiad hwnnw?

Alun Ffred Jones: We had stakeholders here, of course, talking to us about their experiences and their relationship with you as an organisation, and Rachel Sharp, the director of Wildlife Trusts Wales, expressed concerns that NRW is evolving to consider the environment as a barrier to economic development, rather than an enabling factor. How would you respond to that concern or accusation?

[23] **Dr Roberts:** Mae'n rhan o'n pwrpas ni i edrych ar yr amgylchedd, gan gynnwys yr amgylchedd ei hunan, ond yr effaith ar yr economi a chymdeithas hefyd. Nid wyf yn meddwl ein bod ni wedi colli ffocws ar yr amgylchedd. Dyna brif nod y corff, ond mae'n rhaid inni ystyried y pethau eraill yma hefyd. Rwy'n meddwl beth y clywsoch chi oddi wrth y rhanddeiliaid oedd bod nifer o bobl yn gofyn pethau gwahanol gan yr amgylchedd, a'n swyddogaeth ni ydy tynnu'r rheini at ei gilydd i gael yr ateb a'r dyfodol gorau ar gyfer yr amgylchedd.

Dr Roberts: Part of our purpose is to look at the environment, including the environment itself, but the impact on the economy and society too. I don't believe that we've lost focus on the environment. That's the main aim of the body, but we must consider all these other issues too. I believe that what you heard from the stakeholders was that a number of people require different things from the environment, and our function is to draw all of that together to find the best solution and the best future for the environment.

[24] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Jeff, are you finished?

[25] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I had asked you as well about the opportunities presented by the environment Bill and the wellbeing of future generations Act now in terms of your purpose.

[26] **Dr Roberts:** Well, in terms of the environment Bill, we look forward to that. We're happy with the purpose that we've got, but there is a need, I think, to bring it into line with the wellbeing of future generations Bill, and we look forward to receiving that. In terms of the future generations Bill, I think one of the things that gives us a great opportunity to do is actually to be on the public service boards, as they will become. In the past, it's been a bit patchy as to whether we got invited on to the local service boards. But, by putting us on those, we will be making sure that the environment is one of the main considerations of public service boards, and it allows us, I think, to work with our stakeholders in a profitable way. So, we're looking forward to that. We're obviously looking forward, as well, to being on the advisory committee to the commissioner, again, to have discussions on that. So, we think there's a good opportunity here to get our objectives, to get our work programmes, in front of a wider group of stakeholders than perhaps in the past.

09:45

[27] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yes, Mr Matthews.

[28] **Professor Matthews:** There are a lot of things happening at the moment in terms of the legislative framework in Wales, and I think it's probably a challenge for us all to understand how it all fits together. So, for me, as an individual, and, as chairman of the organisation, I've worked very hard to try and understand how the functioning of the infrastructure of 'The Wales We Want' is going to inform what we do in natural resource management area statements, because that's what we've been talking about, and what we envisage the Bill will contain. I've produced a diagram that helps me understand the relationship between water basin plans, national park plans, forest plans, and all the other things that are going on—and it certainly helped me to explain to people how they link together—but the natural resource management statements, which will most likely be based on catchments, will have within them the principles, as Emyr has explained, of our purpose, which is economic, social and environmental. The framework that will be created by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, as it will be, will help us to create that balance of needs within local communities. So, for me, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act provides a very important framework and driver for the way in which we will be creating the statements under the environment Bill—under the environment Act, as it will become.

[29] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Perhaps you could share that diagram with us.

[30] **Professor Matthews:** I would be delighted, yes. Bear in mind it was just for me to understand, and it's helped me. But we're very happy to share that with you.

[31] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. William Powell.

[32] **William Powell:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Bore da. One particular focus of concern that runs through the consultation responses that we have in front of us is the area of consistency of advice, particularly in terms of planning issues. I wonder if you could detail the response that you brought forward when confronted with the issue in the board meeting of NRW as early as December 2013, when these issues were aired by yourself and your board colleagues as to how to take those matters forward.

[33] **Professor Matthews:** Well, I'll leave Emyr to talk about the execution of what we decided, but I think it's very, very important to understand a number of strands for what's happening. The first is that, when we have a set of principles that have been defined for

Wales, their execution at a local level must reflect local circumstances. So, therefore, someone who's living in Risca may be talking to someone in Ruthin, and they may be comparing the application of the set of general principles and see that there are differences in the way in which the framework has been applied because we've taken account of local circumstances. I think there would be a criticism if we were too inflexible, and we had totally consistent advice: people would be saying, 'But that's irrelevant to our local circumstances'. So, that's the first thing.

[34] The second thing is, to be quite honest with you, any organisation of our size will have inconsistencies in what happens on the front line. This is just the way that things are, and, at a time when we're asking for people to do things differently, and to migrate to a new way of doing things, it's more likely during that transition phase that people are going to make those sort of errors on the front line. What's really important is the way that we respond to mistakes like that. One of the things that we've done is, in December of last year, we introduced a customer care strategy, a customer care template, for the way that we do things, that ensures that we will be seeking to delight our customers, wherever they are—they may not get the answers that they want, but they will be happy with the way that we dealt with it—and that is because we understand that the needs of the people that we deal with are very important. So, the principle is: do unto others as you would they do unto you—so, be dealt with in a way that you would wish to be dealt with.

[35] **Dr Roberts:** Specifically on planning, obviously, we were asked from day one to provide a single voice in response to planning applications. It has been a challenge. The previous organisations had different policies, different processes and different systems beneath that, but we have made significant progress, I think. Some of the comments in the consultation responses did refer to the very early days of NRW, when we were still sorting this out. But, just to give you an idea, we receive between 1,500 and 2,000 development planning applications a quarter—so, that's up to 8,000 a year—and we're involved at any one time with more than 20 nationally significant infrastructure project applications. So, there's a significant volume of work there, and it's very important to our function.

[36] What we have been doing is working as a team on this. We've set up a single NRW planning service, with leaders to that team, with fully integrated structures. We've set up an internal development planning advisory board so that we do have consistency of policy and approach, and that provides a governance framework for us. As you mentioned, the board has agreed strategic principles for planning advice. So, that's what we're working within. We now have a single underpinning case management IT system, so we're more effective in the way we actually manage the caseload. And we've actually recruited more staff where we felt that there were staff shortages. So, for instance, we've recruited staff in terms of landscape planning, because we were short of skills on that side. We have a package of training and guidance in place for our staff to make sure that we are consistent.

[37] We feel that we've improved quite considerably. A year ago, we were only responding to about 70 per cent of planning applications on time. That went up to 80 per cent in-year, and we're now achieving over 90 per cent on time, and that is way above what the previous legacy bodies achieved. So, we're making good progress on that to try and ensure that consistency of approach.

[38] **William Powell:** Okay. The board paper that I referred to referred specifically, at that time, to there being no shared understanding of what NRW was seeking to achieve through its planning advice service. Do you feel that that has now significantly improved?

[39] **Dr Roberts:** Indeed. I think this was a big reputational issue for us as an organisation. So, we have attended to this and it has been a priority for me and the team for the last two years to actually get this right. I think we are getting much better responses. I

think what the consultation has shown is that we do need to talk to some groups and possibly some organisations individually to get behind some of their comments. I'd also say that we are trying to change our role a bit in terms of planning, so that we're becoming more of an influencing organisation, for instance, in local development plans, so that we could have views, so we explain what the environmental constraints are very early on, which should make it easier for planning applications, when they come forward, to be within that planning policy. So, we are trying to change our role there and perhaps we do need to communicate to some of the groups our change of approach.

[40] **William Powell:** It's evident that there has been some improvement, from the statistics that you have quoted, but to what extent is there any form of external verification as to the level and pace of improvement within the organisation?

[41] **Dr Roberts:** We're constantly talking to our customers on this: so, the planning authorities, individual developers, and so on. As part of the customer care strategy, which Peter has mentioned, we are thinking of doing a stakeholder survey to see what people feel about the service that we actually offer. So, we are thinking about doing that at the moment. The whole time, we want to hear from our customers what they would like to see happen.

[42] **William Powell:** Okay, that's helpful.

[43] **Professor Matthews:** Can I just add something quickly?

[44] **William Powell:** Please go ahead.

[45] **Professor Matthews:** At the board, where we've debated these issues, along with our executive directors, we've come to a very simple point. I think we can encapsulate it in just a few words: in the past, the attitude was, 'We're against development because it's bad for the environment'. It's a simplification, an over-simplification, but you know there was that attitude, and there are still people who would like us to take that position. Our position is that we are for development in Wales, but in a way that's sustainable. So, this is not an attitude now of, 'We're against it, persuade us if you can'; this is, 'We're part of Team Wales, where we're contributing to the green economy, but at the same time looking at the state of nature—

[46] **Alun Ffred Jones:** If I may say so, that's a pretty bold statement that previous bodies were against development. On what do you base that—

[47] **Professor Matthews:** I said it was an oversimplification, but I think that there was a view in the past that, maybe, development was not necessarily such a good thing and that it was a case of, 'Persuade us if you can'. What I'm saying is that, in principle—

[48] **Llyr Gruffydd:** There may be legitimate reasons for that, of course.

[49] **Professor Matthews:** Pardon?

[50] **Llyr Gruffydd:** There may be legitimate reasons for that.

[51] **Professor Matthews:** What I'm saying is that we're for development, but in a way that's sustainable, and if the development is not sustainable, then we'd be against it. But we're taking a positive attitude rather than a negative attitude. What we're saying is that we support development but in a way that must be sustainable.

[52] **William Powell:** That particular point, just to round off my line of questioning, relates to concerns that have reached us from the Welsh wildlife trusts, from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and, indeed, the Royal Town Planning Institute with regard to the way in

which advice is provided by NRW about the kind of circumstances in many cases that you've just referred to, and that is where there is no formal objection raised but where you have areas of significant concern that can lead to confusion later in the process. I wonder whether you would be in a position to address that and to give us some reassurance about your methodology.

[53] **Dr Roberts:** It's not true to say that we do not object to some developments. We do. We use the full range of responses that we can provide to a planning application. So, if, in our view, the developer, for instance, has not done enough to mitigate any environmental impact, we would in that case object to it. I think what we're trying to say is that we try and adopt a positive attitude if at all possible. We try and arrive at a solution to an issue if that is at all possible. It's not true to say that we don't object. We do object, and we have done that on many cases.

[54] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Russell, did you want to come in?

[55] **Russell George:** Yes. Following William Powell's question on inconsistencies, I have a number of pieces of casework where there are agents—not just individuals, but agents—that are concerned with inconsistencies where they're dealing with applications right across Wales. I was particularly interested in the chair's answer to William Powell's question. You said that there are local circumstances that affect officers' advice. I want to understand that because, to me, usually, the officer would give advice that's their firm professional advice and it would then be up to a planning committee, with local representatives or county councillors, to decide those local circumstances and how those might affect the advice that's being given by professionals. So, can you give me an example of what kind of local issues might affect an officer's advice? That's what I want to understand.

[56] **Dr Roberts:** I'm not sure if I quite got the gist of the question.

[57] **Russell George:** I'll just clarify. It was Peter who, in response to William Powell's question, said that, when providing advice on an application, local circumstances are taken into account. So, what might change the outcome compared to where an application has been given advice across Wales? What local circumstances would change an officer's advice?

[58] **Dr Roberts:** Okay. Well, perhaps to give a particular example, some proposals have a more damaging effect on the local environment than others. So, our priority is obviously to protect the most sensitive areas of Wales, and particularly areas that are designated, whether it's on landscape or wildlife grounds. So, we would have, if you like, a lower threshold in terms of tolerance for development on those kinds of areas as opposed to areas of lower landscape value or wildlife value. So, it would vary as to the particular circumstances in a locality. Our advice would take account of the importance of protecting certain areas, but, in some areas, there isn't as strong a need to protect those areas. So, we would vary our advice on that kind of basis.

[59] **Russell George:** Right. Okay.

[60] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Wyt ti eisiau dod **Alun Ffred Jones:** Do you want to come in
mewn ar hwn? on this?

[61] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Well, it will sort of evolve into—

[62] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, let me ask Joyce to come in first, then.

10:00

[63] **Joyce Watson:** Leading on nicely there to special areas of conservation—*[Inaudible.]*—could you explain how you're going to increase the number of SACs that meet the target of 90 per cent? Because, in Wales, the condition of SACs is worse than anywhere else in the UK: England has 33 per cent; Scotland, 54 per cent; and Northern Ireland has 42 per cent of sites in favourable condition. So, we really are at the bottom of the league there. So, following on from what you were saying, because one of the obvious things that could change the state of a special area of conservation might be development—and let's follow the theme of presumed positive outcome for development—how do you intend to do something about that?

[64] **Dr Roberts:** Okay. Obviously, SACs and SSSIs are important areas, designated as such. And, as you say, the record is not good on that. That's a record over many, many years. We prioritise those areas in terms of how we can actually improve the environment on them. So, for instance, if we take the case of rivers, we are working with local angling communities, with wildlife groups, in terms of improving river catchments, so that we actually improve the quality of the water there. I think, with the new functions that we have within NRW, we are much more conscious of managing the whole river catchment. So, for instance, if there's forestry or woodland on an area, we are very conscious of the impact of that on the river catchment. So, a variety of ways in terms of improving SACs. Another way of doing it would be to sign management agreements with local landowners in terms of improving areas. I agree with you that there is a big scale of change that needs to be done here, but as I say, we do prioritise the highest value environmental areas in Wales.

[65] **Joyce Watson:** If I can, leading on from that, there are many organisations involved in trying to help preserve or enhance the condition of a SAC or an SSSI. And, yet, I've been led to believe that some of those organisations have had their grants refused to carry on that very good work. So, we're talking about joining things up, which is what your organisation is all about. So, how can you convince those organisations, and me, that that is happening, holistically, when we're talking about the conditions of SACs, and all that goes within it to preserve them or enhance them, or even to monitor their status?

[66] **Dr Roberts:** Well, we take very much an overarching approach to where the priority areas in Wales are and, as I say, designated areas are amongst the most important. I haven't got a figure for how much of our expenditure is focused on those areas, but I would imagine it to be very high. In terms of working with third sector organisations, yes, they have a crucial role to play with us. Although some will say that they've had their grants reduced or refused, you need to understand that there was too much demand for the money we had available for contracting with third sector organisations. So, for instance, we had demand for £18 million-worth of grant funding, whereas we only have just over £4 million available—sorry, £3 million available each year. So, there's an imbalance from that point of view. What I would say is that of the grant funding that we provided, 85 per cent of it went on biodiversity projects. So, I hope that illustrates that we do attach a very high proportion of our resources to those kinds of areas.

[67] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Llyr Gruffydd has signalled.

[68] **Llyr Gruffydd:** I would come back to the point around this confusion that I feel is there in terms of your role as a statutory adviser within the planning system and, of course, your purpose as an organisation. Now, clearly, there has been a great deal of lack of clarity amongst your own staff—that was referenced earlier in a previous board paper of yours—around whether they should be interpreting Natural Resources Wales's purpose in their advice. We know that the Government has told you that you should adopt a more permissive approach to development. We also know that you sought independent legal advice from a QC to try and seek some clarity around that, and I presume that has given you further clarity. Would you be willing to share that advice with us, so that we can enjoy that same degree of

clarity?

[69] **Dr Roberts:** I'm not sure if we—. Well, what we certainly can provide is a note to the committee in terms of how we approach these issues. This is ingrained in the policies that we actually have. We believe that we are providing advice in line with our purpose and our statutory functions.

[70] **Llyr Gruffydd:** But I would ask whether you would share the legal advice itself; whether you would publish that as an organisation, because this is a key issue for a number of people that's causing a great deal of frustration out there among stakeholders and, indeed, amongst your own staff. I think that publishing that advice in its entirety would be a very, very positive step on your behalf in trying to address some of these issues. So, I'd ask you again: would you please consider publishing that?

[71] **Dr Roberts:** Can I take advice on that, please? I'll write to the committee.

[72] **Professor Matthews:** Can I come back? Two or three things. I accept the point that you're making about our purpose and our statutory responsibilities and so on, and I've tried to explain how we have resolved what we see as being the right balance that would deliver our purpose. Let me assure the committee that under no circumstances has the Minister—any of our Ministers—told me or the chief executive that we must be more permissive for development. We have resolved our purpose in the way in which we have. That's the first thing. The second thing—

[73] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Could I—yes, okay, sorry.

[74] **Professor Matthews:** The second thing is that, in terms of the framework, we're going through this interim period. We've been set up. We've gone through two years in which we have sought to understand our role in delivering the leading green economy of Wales, but I think we all recognise that there needs to be some evolution of the framework in which we operate. That is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. That will be the environment Act—it will provide us with a stronger framework in which these matters will be balanced. The environment Act will require us to produce area statements based on natural resources management that set out the resolution of all these issues that we've been debating—a statement that must be approved by our Minister. It's a public—there'll be a consultation and it will go to the Minister to be approved in a transparent way. As I explained, the area statements will be set against the background of the wellbeing of future generations. So, there is a framework in which these matters will move forward in the near future.

[75] **Llyr Gruffydd:** But I have to challenge you on your assertion that the Government has not told you to adopt a more permissive approach to development, because we have e-mails published between Government Ministers and your own officials saying as such.

[76] **Dr Roberts:** They may be trying to say those things to us, but we will take an independent view, as ever. So, I don't think we are influenced by Government Ministers or anything; those are clearly matters for us as an independent organisation.

[77] **Professor Matthews:** And not all of our staff are saying the same things. Some of our staff, who are finding it a challenge to move from the old way of doing things to the new way of doing things—

[78] **Alun Ffred Jones:** There is inconsistency, then.

[79] **Professor Matthews:** —will be feeling uncomfortable and will have expressed themselves in our staff survey, and I've already addressed that issue.

[80] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Emyr Roberts touched on the independence issue. Of course, it's been a key feature of a lot of the evidence that we've received from stakeholders in preparation for today's meeting—concerns around the independence of Natural Resources Wales. How do you therefore respond to stakeholders that tell us that, in fact, you're operating as if you were a department of the Welsh Government?

[81] **Dr Roberts:** I totally refute that.

[82] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, what discussions are you having with those stakeholders?

[83] **Dr Roberts:** We all know that, on environmental matters, there are often conflicting views, with people having very strong views on either side. Our job is to actually look at all the evidence and come up with our own independent consideration of the development; and, that's what we do. We're not influenced by departments or other stakeholders in reaching that. We publish our evidence, we publish our responses to planning applications in a totally transparent way, so we are totally open on this. We go to planning inquiries and present our evidence, particularly for the larger inquiries. We are questioned by the planning authorities, the Planning Inspectorate, and all of that. We defend our position. So, we are acting independently. The fact that some organisations don't like the outcome, I'm afraid, is not a matter for us.

[84] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Well, what discussions have you had with them about that, then, because it's not a case of just turning your backs on them and throwing your hands up into the air? Surely, it's a case of sitting down and discussing with them and persuading them that that's not the case.

[85] **Dr Roberts:** We're very happy to sit down with anybody to explain our position on things, but, regrettably, some organisations don't accept that.

[86] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Could I ask you to outline, as well, then, what consideration you've given to publishing your planning and permitting advice? You mentioned that you do publish some elements. Is there more that you could do in that respect?

[87] **Dr Roberts:** I think, obviously, in response to any development application, we submit our advice—and, remember, we are advisers; we are not the decision makers—we publish our advice and explain how we arrive at it. Obviously, for the bigger developments, we provide reports of why we've arrived at our conclusions, and that's totally transparent. I'm not sure what more we can actually do.

[88] **Professor Matthews:** Chair, can I just—

[89] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Just a minute. William Powell, did you want to ask a supplementary on that?

[90] **William Powell:** Thank you, Chair. Just one issue, sticking with this theme of transparency and traceability, and so on: I think it was at a point in the first year of life of NRW that a former board member, in an e-mail exchange that came to light through the freedom of information process, referred to an aversion at the very top of the organisation to having comments and advice committed to e-mail because of the danger of that then coming to light through the freedom of information process. Do you accept that, at that early stage, there was such an aversion to the full use of e-mail in that fashion? What protocols are now in place to ensure that communications are committed to e-mail where appropriate and that they are not overly influenced by concerns about them subsequently coming into the public domain?

[91] **Professor Matthews:** Right; a couple of things. The first is that I know what you're referring to, and what I said was: 'Be careful what you commit in terms of gossip'. What I said was, 'If you want to have a gossipy conversation about this, that and the other, that's not the sort of thing that ought to be committed to e-mails'. What I said has been totally distorted. At no stage have we implied that any of the formal processes that are committed to paper should not be committed to paper, because it is wrong. It was about gossip.

[92] The second thing is that, to go back to the point about talking to organisations—and Emyr will correct me if I'm wrong—when we're dealing with a particular planning application, we give our advice. We don't then go into some sort of consultative process, talking to different organisations about the kind of advice we should give. I accept that, but what I reject is that we haven't talked to those organisations about our attitude and about our principles. I have talked to Rachel Sharp—you mentioned her—personally and to other leaders that you will recognise of the green movement in Wales about our attitudes and our policies. So, it's wrong to say that we're not talking to them, but it is right to say that we don't go out and consult with these organisations when we deal with particular planning applications. Would that be a correct way of putting it?

[93] **Dr Roberts:** Indeed. It goes back to looking at the evidence. I'm absolutely confident my staff are not influenced by whoever, board members included, but we will arrive at our own conclusions on that. I'd be very happy to defend that.

[94] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I want to move on. Jenny Rathbone.

[95] **Jenny Rathbone:** Clearly, you're operating in a very controversial environment. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is a very steep learning curve for many public bodies and you're one of the guardians of sustainability. Looking at your briefing paper, you talk about not planning any further 'organisational wide open exit schemes'. Why were they open in the first place as opposed to looking at your new staffing structure in the light of your new objectives and business plan?

[96] **Dr Roberts:** So, the question is: why did we run it in the first place?

[97] **Jenny Rathbone:** No; why were they open? Because 'open' gives me the sense that anybody could leave if they wanted to.

10:15

[98] **Dr Roberts:** Okay, I see what you mean. Those schemes that we ran were open to all staff to actually apply for. We went through, then, a process of seeing what skills we had, what skills we wanted to retain and then, out of those applications, we selected people who we thought we could release under the voluntary scheme; other staff, we would want to retain. That final paragraph there is trying to say that we don't, at the moment, countenance a similar scheme to that. However, if an individual member of staff, on any particular grounds, believes that they would wish to leave the organisation—it could be for personal reasons—we may contemplate an agreement with that member of staff, but we need to put that policy in place. So, as I say, we're not contemplating any organisation-wide schemes; however, we might consider it on an individual basis, in certain circumstances.

[99] **Jenny Rathbone:** I'm struggling to understand why—. If individuals want to leave an organisation and go somewhere else, that's fine, but why do you have to send them off with a pack of money?

[100] **Dr Roberts:** Certainly, we would need to develop a policy around that, but, for

example, if a particular role came to an end—that we didn't want to carry on with that role—we might consider having a discussion with the staff around that.

[101] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, what you're saying is that your organisational structure is still a work in progress, is it?

[102] **Dr Roberts:** No. I think what we're saying is—. No, we've got an organisational structure and we've carried that right through the organisation, so we're happy with that. However, within that, if there are individual roles that may change, we are willing to sit down with the staff and have a discussion around that. I should stress that these would be pretty exceptional circumstances. It's not designed for significant numbers of people.

[103] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, because I think the concern that's been expressed by many stakeholders is that you've lost a lot of expertise in terms of conservation, ecology, forestry, landscape and fisheries. How do you contest that?

[104] **Dr Roberts:** In the schemes that we ran, we were very rigorous in the way we looked at the applications, to make sure that we didn't lose the staff that we felt that we needed to carry on. Yes, we have had to reduce costs, so, we've probably lost about 200 since vesting day, but we have been very careful to retain expertise in the areas that we actually need them. So, in some areas, staff have left, but we are confident that we still have the expertise and the numbers in those areas to fulfil our functions.

[105] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, you think that the stakeholders are wrong then, do you?

[106] **Dr Roberts:** Well, it's interesting that a variety of stakeholders have all said, 'Well, we've lost people in this patch and that patch'. Yes, obviously, we have reduced staff overall, but I think, for me, the important thing is that we're still able to carry out our functions effectively, and I believe that we're doing that.

[107] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay. Could you just explain why the second scheme was, per head, a lot more expensive than the first scheme? Because, in the first scheme, it was £5 million for 126 people, and, in the second scheme, it was £3.05 million for 58 people.

[108] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, that's probably down to just the salary levels of the staff who left, I think. There's no—. I think that the first scheme picked up more senior members of staff, because we were in the process of restructuring, particularly at the higher tiers there. I don't think there's anything more to it than that.

[109] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, so, could you send us a note? Also, I think that it would be very useful for us if you could give us a breakdown of the numbers of staff who left per predecessor body, so we can see whether it's proportional or whether one predecessor body has lost more staff, because I think that this will help counter—if you think that it's accurate—this concept of the stakeholders that, actually, expertise has been hollowed out in certain areas.

[110] **Alun Ffred Jones:** The suggestion was that ex-Environment Agency staff had been kept on—there's no problem in expertise there, Welsh Water was happy, and so on—but, environmental bodies seemed to say that they'd lost their previous contacts, and that expertise in some areas had been lost. So, is there any way to verify that—that one sector or some sectors had disproportionate numbers of staff?

[111] **Dr Roberts:** I've seen no evidence to suggest that, whatsoever. There's certainly nothing in the way that we ran the voluntary exit scheme that would get that kind of outcome. I actually think it's quite difficult to do this, because, for instance, if you take an issue like

biodiversity, well, actually, there were biodiversity and conservation staff within the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency, as well as in the Countryside Council for Wales, so I'm not sure we'd get a meaningful answer to that.

[112] **Professor Matthews:** Chair, I think it's very important to add that we shouldn't be looking at—. Yes, we can provide those numbers. It's much more important that we should focus on the service that we deliver—the outcome. So, for example, you quoted the fact that there is a perception that we've cut our forestry skills. Well, think about it: in the two years that we've been operating, not only have we delivered all of the other things that we were expected to deliver, but we coped with a major outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum* and we're replanting with new diverse forests. We have some really exciting plans for forest resource plans to link in with natural resources management. So, rather than saying, 'Oh, well, we've cut x per cent of forestry staff', we should be saying, 'But what have you coped with? What are the skills that you've got delivered?', and I would like to think that you would be excited by what we've delivered over the last two years and what we're planning to deliver with our forests.

[113] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Llyr Gruffydd—I'll come back to you, Jenny—on this?

[114] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Yes, but, of course, we do know that capacity issues exist, in terms of increased workload on the individuals who are left, and I note that you're still failing to meet your targets for responding to requests for planning advice within required deadlines, so it's not all rosy in the garden.

[115] **Professor Matthews:** At the moment, we're responding to 90 per cent. I think that what you've got is the annual figure; you will see that, over the year, over the four quarters of the year, we've got steadily better, and I think that, in the last quarter, we were hitting a target of 90 per cent.

[116] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, that goes back to the earlier discussion about the improvements that I think we've made in the planning. There are pressures on us. We have to be very careful in what we do and what we don't do. We have to make some tough choices and we will need to convey those to our partners; that is the public-money climate that we're actually living in at the moment.

[117] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Would it be right to say that, in general, if there were any additional requirements of Natural Resources Wales, then you would, naturally, expect additional resources to go with that?

[118] **Dr Roberts:** We would always expect that, yes.

[119] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Jenny.

[120] **Jenny Rathbone:** Do you expect Success with Less to lead to more staff changes—more staff reductions?

[121] **Dr Roberts:** Not in terms of staff reductions, no. Success with Less is an efficiency programme, making sure that we're getting the best value from the money that we actually have—things like procurement. We're looking at the way that we run our fleet operations, for instance, our accommodation—that kind of thing—so there is not a direct connection with staffing.

[122] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, your original target of 1,850 by the end of next year—or is it the following year—is your current staffing plan, is it?

[123] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, we're around that. In terms of the permanent headcount that we've got—1,891 is what we have at the moment. Even that figure includes changes since the original 1,850; for instance, it wasn't envisaged that we would take on the Llanelli laboratory, which we have done, so that's about 40 to 50 people there. We have taken on other functions, as well. So, it's not directly comparable, but it's there or thereabouts. So, we're working within the business case on that.

[124] **Jenny Rathbone:** Thank you. We've already had some mention of the staff survey, and you bravely suggested that you wanted to see what the baseline was, from which you were hoping to rise. I suppose one of the issues that is of concern is that 42 per cent suggested that they didn't really have access to the right learning and development opportunities, which, obviously, is key to Success with Less.

[125] **Dr Roberts:** I think that is an important finding coming out of that. The truth is that we haven't fully developed our learning and development offer yet, and we are working on that as we speak. That is a priority for us, that we have adequate learning and development programmes throughout the organisation, in terms of management but also in terms of specific skills. So, we do accept that feedback from staff, and we are working towards that, and it will be a priority for us this year.

[126] **Jenny Rathbone:** As you acknowledge that the morale of the workforce is not good, from the survey, what are the strategies you are using to turn that around?

[127] **Dr Roberts:** I wouldn't agree that the morale is not good. What came out of the staff survey was quite a mixed picture—a real commitment to the work, a real commitment to the teams. People spoke favourably about their line managers, but there were areas of concern, and learning and development would be one. We touched on organisational purpose and also just the pace of change, which we've had to go through over the last couple of years.

[128] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, they were very, very critical of senior management, weren't they? I mean, there was a lack of faith that senior management could deliver what they intended to do and to convey that and bring their staff along with them. I think that was one of the key findings, wasn't it?

[129] **Dr Roberts:** Chairman, I'd say that in every staff survey I've been involved with over the years, there's always criticism of senior staff.

[130] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, so what are you going to do about that?

[131] **Dr Roberts:** So, what am I going to do about it? First of all, I mentioned earlier we've published a road map, which, hopefully, is a way of actually guiding our staff in terms of the direction of travel that we've got. What we're actually doing at the moment is that we're sitting down and talking to staff, at team level and at directorate level, to find out what is behind those results: what is really driving those concerns. I think what's started to emerge is simply that part of it is the pace of change and some people are uncomfortable with that. I readily admit we cannot carry on at the same pace of change as we have for the first two years. We had a massive transition programme as well as doing the day job. So, that's a concern. I think we can do more in terms of improving communications with staff.

[132] The other thing I'd say about the staff survey is that, at the time, we didn't have all the teams in place, so there was a lot of uncertainty as to where people stood in the organisation. That has been concluded now, so we've got a much more robust structure to go behind. There are issues around things like delegated authority, where some staff felt that they weren't allowed to take all the decisions that they would like to. Again, we're looking at that with a view to pushing that further into the organisation, obviously within policies, but that

people are more accountable for their budgets and so on.

[133] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A number of people want to come in here. Russell, do you want to?

[134] **Russell George:** I wanted to ask before, but questions seemed to be moving on to talk about the staff survey. I just wonder how the staff survey was conducted, because that then translates into how it was analysed. I notice 58 per cent of staff completed the survey. Were all staff encouraged to complete the survey, and was that right across the organisation?

[135] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, absolutely. We said from the outset that we wanted all staff to engage with this, so we went to everybody and said, 'Please participate'. The more accurate the results, the better feel we get for what's happening in our organisation. So, we didn't just have an online survey; we had a paper-based survey for those staff who don't have access on a daily basis to online. So, we very much encouraged that.

[136] **Russell George:** Did you complete the survey yourself as well?

[137] **Dr Roberts:** Sorry?

[138] **Russell George:** Did you complete the survey yourself?

[139] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, of course.

[140] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Julie Morgan.

[141] **Russell George:** Sorry, can I just ask on how the survey was conducted as well? I notice 25 per cent believe that the board doesn't have a clear vision, but it depends, of course, on what options are available in terms of how the answers can be provided. So, does that, for example, mean that we should jump to the conclusion that 75 per cent don't think that the board has a clear vision, or were there other options in there that were more middle-ground options, if you like?

[142] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, it was basically a five-point response, so I think it went: 'totally agree', 'agree', 'don't agree', 'disagree', or 'totally disagree'. I think that's how it went. So, you do have to interpret results in that. Sorry, I don't have that particular one in front of me, but we can give you a breakdown of that.

[143] **Russell George:** I think it would be useful because how the question areas are constructed really provides perhaps a fuller answer, I suppose.

[144] **Alun Ffred Jones:** That survey is available.

[145] **Russell George:** Is it online somewhere?

[146] **Dr Roberts:** I can only stress that we really welcome and we really want to hear what our staff are saying so that we can plan for the future. We have a very open mind on this.

[147] **Russell George:** I think it's good that you've done the staff survey.

[148] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Julie Morgan.

[149] **Julie Morgan:** I think, Peter, you said earlier on that this survey was done when things were rock-bottom.

[150] **Professor Matthews:** What I said was that we did the exercise at a time when we knew that we were not going to get glowing returns, because—

[151] **Julie Morgan:** When was this done?

[152] **Dr Roberts:** It was carried out in February.

[153] **Julie Morgan:** February this year?

[154] **Dr Roberts:** February this year, and the executive team and I did it with our eyes wide open. In response to the question here, not all the staffing structures were in place at that time. There was a considerable period of change going on. We deliberately took the decision to do it at that time, because we genuinely wanted to hear from people.

10:30

[155] **Professor Matthews:** Chairman, I think this is a very important point because this is good, solid, practical management. This is the sort of thing that a good leadership should be doing. With many organisations, of course, they don't have the results of the staff survey trawled over in the way that we have. I serve in other organisations on boards. They've done the staff survey—and these organisations are also in transition—and similar results are coming out. In fact, I've suggested that we exchange experiences.

[156] **Julie Morgan:** So, has that transition passed now? Do you think it's moved on from that survey?

[157] **Dr Roberts:** I think we have. As I say, certainly all the staffing structures are in place now, so everybody knows who their team leader is, which function they're in. So, that's already moved on. We're learning from this. I think people now realise that, in the first two years, there was a lot of change, and we were asking a lot of staff. Now, we're more into a steady state. We're lifting our heads in terms of what we need to do with the organisation. A lot of the transition projects have now been completed, so that we can move on as an organisation. That's the whole point behind sitting and listening to staff because we genuinely want to move that forward.

[158] **Professor Matthews:** Chair, could I just follow up the question to Ms Morgan? We are in a period of development, a period of flux. If I were in the shoes of some of our staff, I too would be saying, 'I'm not too sure about the vision and where we're going'. The reason for this is that we haven't yet got an absolutely clear way forward on natural resource management area statements. We can't be clear about that because we haven't yet got the legislation that sets it out. We haven't got a prototype statement that will explain to our staff exactly how things are going to happen. We've got three trials on the way in which we manage catchments, which are helping us to explain to our staff the way things will be, but even at the board meetings, we're saying, 'Well, we're not too sure yet about how everything will be structured together'. When we've got the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 fully enacted, and when we've got the environment Bill fully enacted, we will then have the framework to define the way in which we'll be working in future, and it's going to be much easier to explain to our staff how things are going to be in the longer term. But at the moment, we're still in that area of flux, which is why quite a few of our people are feeling just a little bit uncomfortable, because they can't see the clear way forward that we all want.

[159] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mick Antoniw.

[160] **Mick Antoniw:** I accept the points you make on the staff survey, and any organisation that goes through it, I'd be very surprised if it showed anything else. It's a tool as

part of the transformation. The one area—the only one—that really concerned me, though, was the clear vision point, the reason being that we had a number of sessions previously, and I think you emphasised the importance of getting people to understand what we're about, what we're doing and so on. Of course there will be things that are going to be imprecise, depending upon legislation and so on, but it obviously must be of some concern that people still don't quite get where you're going, even with the limitations of what you know. So, how are you addressing that? Firstly, why is it, in view of everything that was done to try and get people onboard with the broad vision, and how's that being addressed now?

[161] **Dr Roberts:** Yes. You're right. Going back to what Peter was saying, this is all very new. We're still working through what this actually means in practice. So, you know, there's a sort of definition there. I think the real job is actually connecting what people's day-to-day activities are with this broader vision. So, if your particular expertise is woodlands, coastal issues, landscape or whatever, how does that relate to the wider issue? How we're addressing it is that one of our key projects going forward—our key programmes going forward, which is in this document—is around natural resource management. We will be discussing with staff, but also explaining to staff, what this concept of sustainable development of natural resource management is all about and how that actually relates to their day-to-day job. We want to hear from staff as to what contribution they want to make. My experience with the organisation is that, when you get staff from the different legacy organisations together discussing a single issue, like river basin management or whatever, there's a real richness of skills and knowledge there, which we want to capture and which we want to bring forward. So, we want to develop the project, natural resource management and all that, by involving staff, and we have a specific programme to deal with it.

[162] **Mick Antoniw:** Although part of the issue, of course, is that it's not just the vision of the staff themselves in the organisation. There does seem to be a lack of clarity or confidence on whether they feel that the board has a clear vision. Now, you mentioned communication and so on. Is this something of concern to you, because if the people who work for an organisation don't feel that the board have got it clear in their minds what they're doing, how do you address that?

[163] **Dr Roberts:** I think my response is that we've been set up and this whole project is around a holistic view of the environment, moving away from the previous compartmentalised views that one organisation dealt with rivers and floods and another with conservation. The whole thing is about actually joining us up, yes, and taking that overarching view. Now, part of that is actually developing the tools and the policies that make that work in practice, and that's the journey that we're on. This is a five-year journey, and I make no excuse about that.

[164] In Wales, we are world leaders in this stuff. No other country in the world is trying what we're trying to do, which is to take this holistic approach. So, it's inevitable that there's a lot of uncertainty: 'What does it mean for me in practice?'; 'What does it mean for areas in practice?' We're working through that. As I say, in terms of the trial areas, we've got three of those going on at the moment. We're picking up really valuable information on that as we're going through. We want to bring all the skills and all the knowledge that we've got, so that we do have better outcomes for the environment. That's the whole thing.

[165] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Jeff Cuthbert quickly, and then I want to come to you and then—

[166] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you very much, Chair. You've been very honest on the issue of staff development and skills. As has been said, 58 per cent of the staff at the moment don't feel that they have the right access to continuing professional development. Are you confident that when the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 come into force, in April of next year, you'll be able to return to this or its successor committee and say

that, yes, you now have systems in place that will enable you to ensure that you have the right skillsets across the board and have identified how you're going to anticipate future skills needs?

[167] **Dr Roberts:** Indeed. I think this is a key area for us. I think I can give you that assurance. As I was saying earlier, this is an area that we need to develop, and, you know, we're learning as we're going on. We've got a good grip, I think, in terms of the skills that we need going forward. We need to make sure that all members of staff know what is required of them and how they all fit together. If I can give you just a specific example: we're moving towards what we call forest resource plans, so this is a much broader look at what forests and woodlands are all about, not just about growing timber, but actually taking the whole—what the conservation needs are and what the water requirements are. That needs a much broader set of skills than we currently have. So, we're working to develop those specific skills in the organisation so that we're well placed to deliver them in future.

[168] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mr Matthews, briefly, and then I'll come to you, Joyce.

[169] **Professor Matthews:** Just to stitch two or three points together, communication is absolutely crucial, and anyone who's run a large organisation will know it's, 'Tell it once, tell it twice, tell it thrice' before the message gets through. I think we do have a communications challenge and we need to be better, but one of the things that I can assure you is that, at the board, we are crystal clear about our vision, our mission and direction. Tying those points together with the point that Mr Cuthbert made, we recognise that a very important way of us communicating is to use the professional institutions, and we are very supportive of the CPD programmes of all of the relevant bodies, and we have a working relationship with the Society for the Environment, which is the overarching body that awards the status of chartered environmentalist. In fact, we've arranged for the society to interview our Minister, and I have written an article every month on what we do and how everything fits together in the magazine of the biggest of those, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, and we can send you copies of those articles. We're reaching out and talking to our staff in that way, where I'm communicating as chairman that I'm absolutely on target in terms of vision. Our board members also express themselves very clearly when they meet our staff.

[170] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. Joyce Watson and then Julie Morgan.

[171] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you. We've focused very much on internal communication. I want to focus on external communication and I'm going to come back to the grants for the third sector. According to evidence that we've had, there was a Welsh Government code of practice on funding for third sectors and what they're saying is that, on a number of those points, you have come short. One of those points was that the advice that you provided to bodies was contradictory and it changed, that timescales provided for applications were unrealistic and that decision time was too long. Then there was the capping of overhead costs at 7 per cent, making projects unsustainable for non-governmental organisations. Then, even further down the line, when those who were successful were successful, there were delays in receiving formal offer letters. So, that's external communications and processes. What I would like is for you to explain or reply to that first of all, and if you accept those allegations and comments, to tell us how you're going to move that forward positively.

[172] **Dr Roberts:** Okay, thank you. Obviously, we read those comments in the consultation and we need to take those on board. In some cases, I think we need to talk to the individual organisations themselves. Clearly, we're supporting 120 projects here and it's only a small number of those organisations that did reply, so we just need to put that in context. Clearly, we need to learn from those messages, so I don't want to appear defensive at all on that.

[173] In terms of a couple of the specifics, on the overhead costs, what we were finding was that some organisations were claiming a lot more than others for overhead costs, so we felt that we needed to put a threshold in on that; that's what we've done. We're happy to look at that cap again for future rounds, but again, we felt that it was a realistic figure to put in. Clearly, if you allow some organisations to put more in for overheads, there'll be less money available for other organisations. So, it's a finite pot on that. Sorry, I can't remember; there were a couple of other points—

[174] **Joyce Watson:** It was about delays in receiving the offers about the timescale. But actually, I suppose the top one was that the advice provided to bodies by you was contradictory and it changed. So, that would be pretty serious, wouldn't it? That's the top one, because if you are going along, applying for a grant and believing that you're expected to produce your information in one way, and suddenly, the goalposts change, that is pretty serious.

[175] **Dr Roberts:** Yes. I would very much welcome, from an organisation or organisations, hearing of that. We believe that we have been consistent throughout. We're very clear. We held a number of stakeholder events before we launched the scheme, so that people understood this. So, if there are any particular issues there, I'm very happy to take those back.

[176] **Joyce Watson:** Well, it's on the consultation, so I'm sure that you have the same information that we have, because we're only taking it from the information that we have. If I can, and this will be my final question on this area, you did say to us that it's gone down from £18 million to £4.2 million of available funds this year, but what you didn't actually explain—and it might help you and, certainly, us—is how that amount compares to the level of grant funding available in the predecessor bodies. In other words, where was the shrinkage?

[177] **Dr Roberts:** I do have those figures. In 2013-14, CCW provided about £4.5 million and the Forestry Commission just under £200,000. So, we offered £4.2 million a year. So, I think it's comparable with those figures, but we had to take account of the reductions in grant in aid on us.

[178] **Joyce Watson:** We understand that.

[179] **Dr Roberts:** So, you know, it was an objective to keep external grant funding at basically the same proportion of grant in aid as the previous organisations. We made a deliberate decision to do that.

[180] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Right. Julie Morgan.

[181] **Julie Morgan:** Just following on about the grants for a moment, what are your views about the views expressed by the Wildlife Trusts and Plantlife that you are reluctant to fund projects where there's some reliance on volunteers for delivery?

10:45

[182] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, I find those comments very puzzling, to be perfectly honest. Many, many of our projects involve volunteers, and we very much welcome that. We can reach much better objectives by using volunteers. Yes, we do expect a recording of volunteers' time, but there were some comments about having to fill in a form on top of a mountain in the rain, or something; I mean—

[183] **Julie Morgan:** Yes, I think that was an actual comment.

[184] **Dr Roberts:** I don't understand that comment at all. That would be, obviously, totally unreasonable. But as part of any organisation, I think, that involved volunteers, yes, you do need to record how much time is spent by the people who are participating. So, we would expect—

[185] **Julie Morgan:** Do you think it's over-bureaucratic?

[186] **Dr Roberts:** Well, I'm very happy to look at that, but I can certainly say that we don't require people to fill forms in on the top of mountains in the middle of gales.

[187] **Julie Morgan:** So, you welcome applications from bodies that are made up, sometimes largely, of volunteers.

[188] **Dr Roberts:** Oh, absolutely, and it's a great way not just of completing the task, but of actually involving people in going out to the countryside and getting involved. So, absolutely. Many of our grant schemes do precisely that.

[189] **Julie Morgan:** So if you can reassure us on that point—

[190] **Dr Roberts:** Absolutely, yes.

[191] **Julie Morgan:** And what about this general view—it's come up already today—that there has been a deterioration in the relationship with the third sector? I think we've touched on it already. What is your view of that?

[192] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, we do—. Obviously, we'll take on board the comments that have been made there. We have, throughout all of this, tried to maintain relationships at all levels with third sector organisations. I personally have met Wales Environment Link, which is an umbrella group for many of these organisations I meet, and the CEOs of these organisations and the Welsh directors, and we have a succession of meetings at different levels. We will continue to do that. We will listen to what the organisations have told us, but I think on the whole that relations are good. Clearly there are funding issues, and as we've explained, we cannot accept all funding applications, but we do the best we can, if you like, with the money that's available to us, and we also explain to organisations, if they haven't been successful, why that is, and how they might improve things for next time.

[193] **Professor Matthews:** But, Chair, I think it's important to distinguish between partnership and partnership funding, and I think one of the mistakes that we made is in the nomenclature of the funds that we're dispersing. It's very important to understand that we work with many organisations and quite a few of those don't involve grants or funds at all. It's very important that we see working together as being the thrust of what we do, and underneath that, we have this grant programme in which we fund particular projects that would deliver natural resources management, and I think the fact that we've had to be rather more cautious with the dispersal of funds, and some people have been disappointed, has been misinterpreted as we don't wish to work in partnership. So, I think we made a mistake in the nomenclature, and we will do something about that.

[194] **Julie Morgan:** Thanks.

[195] **Dr Roberts:** If I could just add one further statistic into this, we received 206 applications for funding and we made funding offers to over 120 of those. That, in my experience, is a higher proportion than many grant-funding bodies are able to do.

[196] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Jenny Rathbone.

[197] **Jenny Rathbone:** I just wanted to pick up on something you said, Mr Roberts, earlier, about how you need to know how many volunteers are involved. Why do you need to know? Why, if you set an organisation a task, isn't it about the outcome? Has the task been completed? Therefore, photographs of the beautifully cleared path, or the dug ditch, or whatever it might be, is the evidence you need, rather than how many volunteers were involved. Surely that's down to the organisation to organise their resources.

[198] **Dr Roberts:** Generally, I agree with you. It is the outcome that is the most important thing, but I think in submitting grant bids many organisations will—.You know, part of their argument for a particular project is involving volunteers, so we need to keep a record of how many volunteers they actually involve.

[199] **Jenny Rathbone:** Well, yes and no. It's heavy handed to know how many hours a volunteer did. They may not be as productive as a member of staff, but if they've had good fun and made a contribution, that's the important thing. Why do you need to know how many were involved? I guess you can question, on observing the application, assessing the application, whether you think they have the capacity to engage with the community, but having awarded them the contract, why is it not possible to simply get on with it? It's their problem if they can't mobilise the resources they said they were going to.

[200] **Dr Roberts:** Yes, I mean, we wouldn't want to be overly bureaucratic about this, but, as I said, some of the projects are around community involvement. That's a major reason for actually funding the projects, so I think we need to have some measure in there of whether that actually happened in practice.

[201] **Jenny Rathbone:** But it could be a lighter touch than if you were engaging with a private body.

[202] **Dr Roberts:** Indeed.

[203] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Iawn. Diolch yn **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. Thank you very
fawr. Julie. much. Julie.

[204] **Julie Morgan:** I just want to talk about general stakeholder engagement, not so much to do with grants. What about communication? It was particularly drawn to our attention about the consultation exercise on the closure of hatcheries in Welsh rivers, and that, perhaps, that wasn't carried out as well as it could have been. I wondered if you had any comments on that.

[205] **Dr Roberts:** Well, that issue was a hugely controversial issue—

[206] **Julie Morgan:** I know.

[207] **Dr Roberts:** —which we looked at very, very carefully. We developed a lot of scientific evidence around that. We discussed it at the board two or three times, I think, and what we did on that was actually to publish all the scientific evidence that was around on that. We had an open consultation on that. We invited organisations to come forward if they could find any different evidence or supplementary evidence, and we listened to that.

[208] **Alun Ffred Jones:** What about the evidence from Iceland, which seemed to contradict your findings? There's an issue in Iceland, apparently, where they re-stocked the river and it's apparently teeming with fish. Are you aware of that example? It's in the responses we've had.

[209] **Dr Roberts:** Well, I think we looked at all the sources of evidence, and they said overwhelmingly that the stocking of fish was not having the desired effect and could be damaging to the environment. I think all the main scientific commentators agree with that analysis. Now, some angling clubs—and I read the consultation responses—don't agree with that, and they're entitled to their opinions on that. But, actually, that was an example of us looking at the evidence very, very closely and being open. We did consult and we did invite any other opinions or any supplementary evidence, but the evidence was overwhelming on that.

[210] Amongst angling groups—and I read the transcript of the session that you had—views do vary a lot on that. So, I think we were as open and transparent as we possibly could be on that issue, and that's the way that we would want to work. If there are controversial issues, we publish the evidence, we say why we're proposing to do this or that, we invite challenge to it, but, at the end of the day, we have to look at the scientific evidence and make recommendations on the back of that.

[211] **Professor Matthews:** We were complimented on making that decision. Obviously, you haven't had those submitted to you.

[212] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yes, we've had one angling association that agrees with you; the rest don't agree with you.

[213] **Professor Matthews:** I think the issue, really, is that it's something that, perhaps, ought to have been decided some time ago and the decision had been ducked because people knew that there would be a furore over the decision. We were complimented on being calm and decisive about the decision, based on evidence, and taking a decision that was right, but which we knew would be controversial.

[214] **Julie Morgan:** I understand it is controversial, but we were told that it was felt that there could be more communication with local fishing and angling groups. We were told that. So, I don't know whether—

[215] **Professor Matthews:** We had very extensive consultation.

[216] **Julie Morgan:** You would deny that, then. You think you did—

[217] **Dr Roberts:** Well, I think, in terms of the consultation, we were quite satisfied that we did that very thoroughly. Going forward, though, we do need to work with the angling clubs in terms of improving rivers and so on. So, we need to develop a close working relationship with those angling clubs. They're very important to us—third sector organisations—and we need to build on that and take their advice on what's best for their particular parts of the river.

[218] **Professor Matthews:** The key point is that we must find out why our Welsh rivers are not being replenished from the Atlantic by returning stocks. This very day, or tomorrow, we have an item on our board agenda under which we're discussing that, and we will be taking forward a series of initiatives to work with other parties, other countries, to find out why it is that the salmon aren't coming back. So, that's the underlying question to be answered—not a long debate about hatcheries, but why is it that the salmon and trout aren't coming back to our rivers.

[219] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Jenny, very quickly.

[220] **Jenny Rathbone:** Very quickly. Our fishery witnesses said that, if somebody in

London applied for a licence to fish on the Tywi or the Dee, the money would go to the Environment Agency, rather than NRW. Is that correct, and, if so, what are we doing about it, because that can't be right?

[221] **Dr Roberts:** Well, that is correct. I think it's your place of residence as to where the money actually goes. We would have to, I think, refer that one to the Welsh Government to try and resolve.

[222] **Jenny Rathbone:** Definitely. That's absolutely ridiculous.

[223] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Ocê. A gaf i jest, cyn fy mod i'n gofyn i Llyr Gruffydd ofyn un cwestiwn ynglŷn â'r gyllideb—? Mae un o'r tystion sydd wedi danfon tystiolaeth i mewn, Iolo Williams y naturiaethwr, yn gwneud yr un un pwynt: ei fod o'n teimlo bod yna golled wedi bod o ran arbenigedd yn y maes amgylchedd. Mae o'n cyfeirio at yr uwch dîm rheoli a bod yna 11 aelod o'r uwch dîm rheoli—a ydy o'n iawn wrth ddweud hynny? Gallwch chi gadarnhau hynny—ac nad oes yna ddim un arbenigwr cydnabyddedig ym maes cadwraeth natur yn aelod o'r uwch dîm rheoli. A ydy hynny'n wir?

Alun Ffred Jones: Okay. May I just, before I ask Llyr Gruffydd to ask one question on the budget—? One of the witnesses who has sent evidence in, Iolo Williams the naturalist, makes the exact same point: that he feels that there has been a loss of expertise in the environment area. He refers to the senior management team and that there are 11 members—is he right in saying that? Maybe you can confirm that—and that there is not one recognised expert in the field of nature conservation on the senior management team. Is that true?

[224] **Dr Roberts:** Mae yna nifer o'r uwch-swyddogion efo profiad. Roedd Tim Jones, y cyfarwyddwr gogledd, wedi dod o gefndir cadwraethaol drwy'r cyngor cefn gwlad. Mae yna nifer o staff eraill sydd wedi ymwneud â bioamrywiaeth a chadwraeth fel rhan o'u gyfa. Felly, nid yw hynny'n wir.

Dr Roberts: A number of the senior officials are experienced. Tim Jones, the director of north Wales comes from a conservation background, from the countryside council. A number of other staff members have had involvement with biodiversity and conservation as part of their careers. So, that's not true.

[225] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Faint o gyn-aelodau staff y cyngor cefn gwlad sydd ar yr uwch dîm rheoli?

Alun Ffred Jones: How many former members of countryside council staff are on the senior management team?

[226] **Dr Roberts:** Un—Tim—ar hyn o bryd. Mi oedd yna gystadleuaeth—

Dr Roberts: One—Tim—at present. There was a competition—

[227] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Un sydd wedi dod o'r cyngor cefn gwlad i'r uwch dîm rheoli. Mae'r lleill wedi dod o'r Asiantaeth Amgylchedd neu o'r tu allan, felly.

Alun Ffred Jones: One has come from the countryside council to the senior management team. The others have come from the Environment Agency or are external appointments, therefore.

[228] **Dr Roberts:** Ydynt, rhai o'r Asiantaeth Amgylchedd, rhai o'r comisiwn coedwigaeth a thri o'r tu allan, ie?

Dr Roberts: Yes, some from the Environment Agency, some from the forestry commission and three from outwith those bodies, yes?

[229] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn fawr. Llyr.

Alun Ffred Jones: Thank you very much. Llyr.

[230] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch yn fawr. Rwyf i jest eisiau gofyn un neu ddau o gwestiynau ynglŷn â'r gyllideb a'r modd mae'r gyllideb yn cael ei rhannu, a dweud y gwir. Rwy'n gweld yn y ffigurau rydych chi wedi eu darparu fod yna ailddosbarthu cyllid wedi bod ymhlith y meysydd *good for* sydd gennych chi—*good for the environment, good for people* ac yn y blaen. Rwyf i jest eisiau holi: a ydy hynny wedi digwydd oherwydd eich bod chi'n ailflaenoriaethu gwaith neu ai bod yna feysydd gwaith wedi symud o un maes i'r llall, o adran i'r llall?

[231] **Dr Roberts:** Tipyn o'r ddau, byddwn i'n dweud. Efallai bod yna wahanol swyddogaethau wedi symud, felly mae hynny'n cael ei adlewyrchu yn y gyllideb, ond beth rydym ni'n ceisio ei wneud ydy gwneud yn siŵr bod cymaint o'r arian yn mynd tuag at yr amgylchedd ag sy'n bosib. Felly, tipyn o'r ddau, byddwn i'n meddwl.

[232] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Felly, mae'r gostyngiad o £7 miliwn a fydd yn *good for the environment*, yn y gyllideb honno, y flwyddyn nesaf, a ydy hynny'n golygu y bydd yna rywfaifaint o effaith ar eich dyletswyddau chi o safbwynt cadwraeth natur, er enghraifft?

[233] **Dr Roberts:** Byddai'n rhaid imi jest edrych tu cefn i'r ffigurau yna, os ydy hynny'n iawn, i weld—efallai ein bod ni jest wedi dosbarthu'r gyllideb mewn ffordd wahanol. Beth fyddwn i'n dweud ydy, ar y cyfan, wrth gwrs, mi oedd yna ostyngiad yn y grant rydym ni'n derbyn wrth y Llywodraeth, felly, rydym ni wedi gorfod cwtogi mewn rhai meysydd. Ond efallai y caf i ddod yn ôl atoch chi ynglŷn â'r ffigur arbennig honno.

[234] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Jest un cwestiwn olaf hefyd, os caf i: a ydych chi'n rhagweld y byddwch chi'n gorfod gofyn i'r Llywodraeth am bres ychwanegol i gyflawni'r dyletswyddau rydych chi eisoes yn disgwyl y bydd angen i chi eu cyflawni?

[235] **Dr Roberts:** Wel, ddim ar hyn o bryd, ond, os ydym ni'n mynd ymlaen â swyddogaethau newydd, rwy'n meddwl y dylem ni ofyn am hynny. Rydym ni'n gwneud dewisiadau anodd iawn ar hyn o bryd, ac ni fyddai'n deg i ofyn i ni wneud

Llyr Gruffydd: Thank you. I just want to ask one or two questions on the budget and the way the budget is allocated, to be honest. I see from the figures that you have provided that there has been a redistribution of funding among the 'good for' areas—good for the environment, good for people and so on. I just want to ask whether that has happened because you're reprioritising work or because work areas have moved from one department to another.

Dr Roberts: A bit of both, I would say. Perhaps various functions have transferred over, so that is reflected in the budget, but what we're attempting to do is to ensure that as much of the funding as possible is going towards the environment. So, a bit of both, I would have thought.

Llyr Gruffydd: Therefore, the reduction of £7 million in good for the environment, in that budget, next year, does that mean that there will be some sort of impact on your duties in terms of nature conservation, for example?

Dr Roberts: I would just have to look behind those figures, if that's all right, to see—perhaps we've just redistributed the budget in a different way. What I would say is that, in general, of course, there was a reduction in the grant that we receive from the Government, so we've been forced to cut back in some areas. But perhaps I can come back to you as regards that particular figure.

Llyr Gruffydd: Just one final question in addition, if I may: do you foresee that you will have to ask the Government for additional funding to fulfil the duties you already expect you will have to fulfil?

Dr Roberts: Well, not at present, but if we do proceed with new functions, I think we should ask for that. We are making very difficult choices at present, and it wouldn't be fair to ask us to carry out additional work without receiving more resources.

ychwanegol heb gael rhagor o adnoddau.

[236] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch.

Llyr Gruffydd: Thank you.

[237] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn fawr iawn. A gaf i ddiolch i'r ddau ohonoch chi am ddod i mewn a rhoi'ch tystiolaeth inni'r bore yma?

Alun Ffred Jones: Thank you very much. May I thank you both for coming in and giving us your evidence this morning?

[238] May I thank both of you for coming in? I understand, Mr Matthews, that you are coming to the end of your term as chair.

[239] **Professor Matthews:** Yes, Chair.

[240] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Thank you for your co-operation during your time as chair, and I wish you well in the future.

[241] **Professor Matthews:** Can I say, just finally—this is my final appearance—how much I've enjoyed my time here? I made a public statement when I was appointed that this was the crowning achievement of my career, after a long career in the environment, and I've done a lot of work in conservation as well as general environmental management. I'm leaving with sadness, but I know that my task is complete, and so I'm leaving with a huge amount of satisfaction that a little bit of me is embedded in what you will be doing in Wales in future.

[242] I do have some Welsh family here, so they will constantly remind me of what it is we're doing. I said at the beginning that my personal paradigm was to leave Wales a little bit wiser, a little bit wealthier and healthier. And I think that Wales is greener, wiser, wealthier and healthier, and I'm very pleased to have made a contribution to that small improvement over the two years. I look forward to my successor, and Emyr and his team, making even bigger steps in making, as I said, Wales greener, wiser, wealthier, healthier.

[243] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn fawr iawn. Thank you.

11:00

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[244] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Iawn. Symudwn ymlaen i eitem 3, papurau i'w nodi. **Alun Ffred Jones:** Right. We move on to item 3, papers to note.

[245] Papers to note: the letter from the European Commission, and, again, a satisfactory comment on our submission, and others as well, regarding drift nets. Are you happy to note them? Diolch yn fawr.

11:01

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod ar gyfer Eitemau 5 a 6 ac o'r Cyfarfod ar 14 Mai Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting for Items 5 and 6 and the Meeting on 14 May

Cynnig:

Motion:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod, ac eitemau 5 a 6 o'r cyfarfod ar 14 Mai, yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(vi). *that the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting, and items 5 and 6 of the meeting on 14 May, in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).*

*Cynigiwyd y cynnig.
Motion moved.*

[246] **Alun Ffred Jones:** This is to go to private session. Move. Okay. All happy. We'll wait to clear the gallery before we move to private session.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:01.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11:01.*