

**Dyddiad /Date:**  
**Gofynnwch am/Please ask for:**  
**Llinell uniongyrchol/Direct line:**  
**Ebost/Email:**

7th June 2021  
 Tim Peppin  
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Julie James MS  
 Minister for Climate Change  
 Welsh Government  
 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Ty Hywel  
 Cardiff Bay  
 CF99 1NA



Dear Julie

### **Natural Resources Wales: call for a review of their powers and remit**

Since NRW was established in 2013, local authorities have developed working relationships with NRW on a number of fronts. At a strategic level there have been some very good examples of joint working and information sharing. This has included agreement on a joint working protocol. However, when dealing with events at a local level there can still be tensions over decisions and choices that have to be made, related to wider governance issues.

At the Leaders' meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May we considered a report on local authorities' (LAs') relationship with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) – copy attached.

A number of Leaders suggested that all is not well in terms of their local experiences. Whilst NRW seeks to be an 'enabler', LAs report that, too often, they find them to be either a barrier or unable to assist. We fully appreciate that, like LAs, they are under financial pressure. However, this is creating difficulties for LAs in trying to manage programmes and fill gaps.

At the time of NRW's formation it was accepted there was a case for bringing together the work of three bodies all charged broadly with the sustainable management of natural resources. There were, nevertheless, questions raised about the prospects of successfully merging organisations with quite distinct and different cultures. It is important that the body's progress and performance are subject to regular review. This should include input from key stakeholders including locally elected Members who deal day-to-day with issues arising on the front line in their areas.

At the meeting, Leaders unanimously backed a proposal to write to you, as the Minister responsible, calling for a review of the powers and remit of NRW. It was felt this should look at the range of

Dr Chris Llewelyn  
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**Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.  
 Ni fydd defnyddio'r naill iaith na'r llall yn arwain at oedi.**

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and will respond to correspondence in the same language.  
 Use of either language will not lead to a delay.

functions undertaken by NRW, consider how well they are being performed and if there might be alternative, more effective arrangements for their delivery. This would require consideration of improvements that could be made within existing legislation (e.g. The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Functions) Order 2013; Environment (Wales) Act 2016) as well as considering the case for any future changes in legislation.

I would be grateful for your thoughts on this. Perhaps we could discuss further at a bilateral meeting between us and/or at a future Leaders' meeting?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Councillor Andrew Morgan  
Leader of WLGA and Spokesperson for Transport, Environment and Sustainability

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Julie James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/10391/21

Councillor Andrew Morgan  
Leader of WLGA and  
Spokesperson for Transport, Environment and Sustainability

3 August 2021

Dear Councillor Morgan,

Thank you for your letter of 7 June 2021 regarding Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

I have noted your concerns and the issues raised in the report from the Welsh Local Government Association Leaders' meeting of 28 May 2021. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

The Deputy Minister and I have recently met with the Chief Executive and Chair of Natural Resources Wales. I have made my expectations clear on resource management, prioritisation and the manner in which I expect NRW to engage with public authorities in delivering their functions and supporting delivery of the Welsh Government's strategic objectives, not least when dealing with emergency circumstances. Specifically, I have asked the Chief Executive and Chair to ensure NRW adopts a 'Team Wales' approach in its dealings with the public and its partners. I intend to work very closely with NRW and will be meeting regularly with the Chair and Chief Executive to monitor delivery.

In relation to flood risk management specifically, the Welsh Government has commissioned Wales' independent Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee to review the delivery of statutory flood functions and responsibilities. I will be assessing the Committee's findings when they are available early in 2022, alongside Local Authority leaders' feedback as well as that of other delivery partners and the public to inform decisions on the way forward. The Welsh Government will then look to bring forward whatever proposals are necessary to secure efficiencies and improvements and enhance delivery to the benefit of our communities.

I am committed to working with NRW and all our partners across Wales to ensure we can effectively meet the challenges of climate change, including responding to serious flooding incidents. The objectives NRW has to deliver on this are ambitious, but key to NRW's success is working in partnership with many other organisations throughout Wales.

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

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

Together with my colleague Rebecca Evans, MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government, I am keen to continue working closely with you and the other Local Authority leaders to understand your concerns and how we can work together on a way forward.

Yours sincerely.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie James AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change