

# Agenda – Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

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Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee Room 5 Tŷ Hywel and video conference via Zoom	Fay Bowen Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 14 May 2025	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 09.15	<a href="mailto:SeneddPAPA@senedd.wales">SeneddPAPA@senedd.wales</a>

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## Private pre-meeting (09.00 – 09.15)

## Public meeting (09.15 – 09.30)

### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

(09.15)

### 2 Paper(s) to note

(09.15 – 09.30)

#### 2.1 Audit Wales' report on The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty: consideration of Welsh Government response

(Pages 1 – 10)

No comments.

#### 2.2 Response from Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Energy and Transport – Welsh Government to the Chair regarding an update on Gilestone Farm

(Pages 11 – 12)

#### 2.3 Future Generations Commissioner Report 2025

[Future-Generations-Report-2025.pdf](#)



**2.4 Audit Wales' report on the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act**

[No time to lose: Lessons from our work under the Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)

**3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting**

(09.30)

**Private meeting (09.30 – 11.00)**

**4 Private paper to note**

(09.30 – 09.45)

**4.1 Audit Wales' report on the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act**

**5 Active Travel in Wales: update from the Committee's visit to Slovenia**

(09.45 – 10.00)

**6 Scrutiny of Accounts – Welsh Government 2023 – 24:  
consideration of draft report**

(10.00 – 10.30)

(Pages 13 – 57)

Paper 1 – draft report

**7 Gilestone Farm: consideration of draft report**

(10.30–11.00)

(Pages 58 – 101)

Paper 2 – draft report

# Management response form

**Report title:** The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

**Completion date:** April 2025

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response Relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)
R1	The Welsh Government should publish a list of public authorities covered by the duty. It should do this before the next reporting deadline at the end of 2025. It should update the list when any new public authority covered by the duty is created.	<b>Accept.</b> We will publish a list of public authorities covered by the duty before the next reporting deadline at the end of 2025. The list will be updated periodically, for example when any new public authority covered by the duty is created.	By the end of 2025	Marine and Biodiversity Team
R2	The Welsh Government should require that public authorities submit their biodiversity plans and reports to it when published or revised. It should also follow up with public authorities if they have not	<b>Accept.</b> We will amend the reporting guidance to include a requirement that reports and plans should be forwarded to us. The section 6 <a href="#">FAQ document</a> already includes a request for public authorities to forward plans to us (response to question 11), but we will include this requirement in future guidance.	By the end of 2025	Marine and Biodiversity Team

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	published these plans and reports as expected.	We will follow up where appropriate with public authorities who have not published plans and reports		
R3	The Welsh Government should publish reports that provide an overall view on public authorities' actions, progress, and compliance with the duty. It should do so every three years in line with the reporting cycle defined by the Act.	<b>Accept.</b> Following each reporting round we will utilise the reports published by public authorities to set out our view on actions and progress. We will provide good practice guides in light of exemplar actions and work with public authorities to identify where improvements are needed to ensure compliance with the duty. The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets)(Wales) Bill will introduce provisions to strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements for section 6.	Within twelve months of each reporting deadline	Marine and Biodiversity Team

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response Relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)
R4	Before the next reporting deadline at the end of 2025, the Welsh Government should lead by example in publishing a high-quality biodiversity plan and report specific to its own actions.	<p><b>Accept.</b> We will publish a section 6 plan which will be developed alongside the update to the Nature Recovery Action Plan proposed for later this year.</p> <p>We will publish a section 6 report by the reporting deadline.</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>December 2025</p>	Marine and Biodiversity Team
R5	<p>The Welsh Government should work with public authorities to review and revise existing guidance and supporting information around the duty. This should include:</p> <p>a) integrating it seamlessly with material produced to</p>	<p><b>Accept.</b> We will work with public authorities to gather views and improve our understanding on practical implementation and challenges. We will look at what has worked well and what can be improved to inform new or refreshed guidance taking into account the evidence gathered by Audit Wales to inform their report and recommendations. Guidance will be co-designed and co-developed with public authorities.</p> <p>a) <b>Accept.</b> We will ensure any updates to the guidance and supporting information will take account of and</p>	Many of the recommendations here will be on an ongoing basis but we will work to align with the existing section 6 reporting cycles. Some will be triggered by the	Marine and Biodiversity Team

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response Relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)
	<p>support the proposed changes to environmental law;</p> <p>b) ensuring public authorities without specific biodiversity expertise can understand it;</p> <p>c) tailoring it for different sectors and types of public authority;</p>	<p>reflect the proposed changes in the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill. For example, we will work with public authorities to revise the guidance for the new biodiversity targets when they are set in secondary legislation.</p> <p>b) <b>Accept.</b> When new guidance is published or existing guidance refreshed it will be written in non-technical language, tailored to and appropriate for its target audience based on feedback received from public authorities.</p> <p>c) <b>Accept.</b> When new guidance is published or existing guidance refreshed it will be written in non-technical language, tailored to and appropriate for its target audience based on feedback received from public authorities. We will work with different types of public authorities to ensure guidance meets different requirements. For example, tailoring guidance for</p>	<p>work required to implement the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill. The timeline for the Bill is yet to be confirmed, but when the targets are set in secondary legislation they will be subject to specific schedules which will govern the timelines for any new or revised section 6 guidance.</p>	

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	<p>d) ensuring it is all easily accessible in, or through, one place;</p> <p>e) clarifying whether guidance has statutory force; and</p>	<p>public authorities that cover the marine environment.</p> <p>d) <b>Accept.</b> We will ensure that all section 6 guidance documents are available through both the Wales Biodiversity Partnership’s and Welsh Government’s website.</p> <p>e) <b>Accept.</b> Guidance issued is statutory guidance. Public authorities (other than a Minister of the Crown or UK government department) “must have regard to” the guidance, as well as the other listed documents in section 6(5) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This means that public authorities must specifically consider these documents but how a public authority does so, i.e. what weight each is given in its decision making process, is for each public authority to determine is appropriate in the circumstances as it remains within their discretion as decision maker.</p>		

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	f) adapting and sharing its own biodiversity toolkit and impact assessment guidance as resources for other public authorities.	<p>We will include a statement explaining this when we update or publish guidance.</p> <p>f) <b>Partially Accept.</b> We will examine the feasibility and benefit of making them available, as part of how we can improve our overall support package for public authorities. This will include working with and assisting public authorities through existing support mechanisms such as the section 6 duty working group and the Wales Biodiversity Partnership. Any toolkit needs to be appropriate for the user – our own internal toolkit may not be of relevance to other public authorities.</p>		
R6	The Welsh Government should provide public authorities with a planning template. It should ensure this is adaptable to those with stand-alone plans and those that have	<b>Accept.</b> We will publish a planning template.	December 2025	Marine and Biodiversity Team

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response Relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)
	integrated biodiversity planning into wider plans.			
R7	The Welsh Government should develop training for public authorities, targeted at staff responsible for developing biodiversity plans and reports. The training should cover the duty and additional requirements arising from the proposed changes to environmental law.	<b>Accept.</b> As noted in the responses to recommendation 3 and 5(f) we will work with public authorities to explore what additional support we can provide to assist them in complying with the section 6 duty. This will include looking at possible training provision but will include other options, such as opportunities to build on existing support packages, for example the NatureWise course offered by Academi Wales.	As linked to the Environment (Principles, Governance, and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill timelines will be governed by when targets are set in regulations.	Marine and Biodiversity Team

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R8	To improve quality and consistency, the Welsh Government should routinely provide feedback to public authorities on the plans and reports they submit.	<b>Accept.</b> We will use our existing governance mechanisms to provide feedback when appropriate including working with and through umbrella organisations. The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets)(Wales) Bill will introduce provisions to strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements for section 6 and this recommendation will be considered as part of the work required to develop our approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting.	Not applicable	Marine and Biodiversity Team
R9	The Welsh Government should rigorously assess the costs of its proposed changes to environmental law and ensure there are adequate resources within (or provided to)	<b>Accept.</b> This will be considered as part of the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill Regulatory Impact Assessment and further impact assessments that will be required when secondary legislation is developed. As part of the target setting framework	Not applicable	Marine and Biodiversity Team

Ref	Recommendation	<b>Management Response</b> Relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	<b>Completion date</b> Completion date for planned actions	<b>Responsible officer (title)</b>
	public authorities to support effective implementation.	proposed under the Bill there will be a consultation process which will allow public authorities to make representations.		

Mark Isherwood MS  
Chair  
Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

28 April 2025

Dear Chair

## **GILESTONE FARM**

Thank you for your letter of 20 March seeking an update on the position with Gilestone Farm. My responses to the Committee's questions are set out below.

Has the Welsh Government sought an updated valuation for Gilestone Farm?

Gilestone Farm was assessed as part of the Welsh Government's annual asset valuation process in March 2025. The property was valued at £3,750,000, with a comment placed on the valuation noting that the presence of ospreys on the site inevitably brings some uncertainty to the process.

Has the existing agricultural lease been extended and on what terms?

Are there any new tenancy opportunities currently being explored? If not, do you have any other proposals for the use of the land (other commercial activities/nature recovery etc)?

Is the Welsh Government considering the sale of the Farm? If not, at what point is this likely if there are no further tenancy or other opportunities identified?

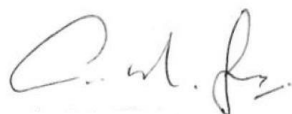
The property is leased on commercial terms via a Farm Business Tenancy to November 2025, and officials are currently considering options for farm management arrangements beyond that period. Members of the Committee will appreciate the significance of the nesting ospreys at the site, and I can confirm the ospreys have recently returned and within days of their arrival have laid an egg. The birds' welfare, and the protection of the nest, continue to be critical factors when considering future options for the site.

Parc Cathays/Cathays Park  
Caerdydd/Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

I will write again to the Committee when I am able to provide an update on our proposals for the site.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Slade', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Andrew Slade**  
Director General  
Economy, Energy and Transport

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# Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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