

ROCP 41, RSPB Cymru

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith | Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Adolygiad o flaenoriaethau'r Pwyllgor ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd | Review of the Committee's priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Ymateb gan RSPB Cymru | Evidence from RSPB Cymru

Your views

1. What are your views on the Committee's three strategic priorities: Climate Change; Sustainable Communities; and Protecting and enhancing the natural environment?

We are nearly one year on from COP15 and global high level nature targets have been agreed. There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the increasing nature crisis, in only a few weeks the State of Nature 2023 will be launched showing the latest and historic trends in nature.

With continued declines in the natural world and the growing climate crisis we urge the Committee to continue to have a strong focus on these areas, in particular how Wales must tackle biodiversity loss and climate change in synergy.

During the Senedd debates on the Agriculture Bill, and the recent Committee session on Biodiversity (June 2023) we have heard that protecting/maintaining and enhancing nature is not enough: we need to be discussing how to restore nature and drive its recovery, and we would encourage the Committee to emphasise this in setting out its priorities.

We support the Committee working with the other Senedd Committees to ensure climate and nature run as considerations throughout their ongoing scrutiny work.

2. To what extent are the Committee's three strategic priorities still relevant, reflecting on social, economic and environmental developments since they were set at the start of the Sixth Senedd?

See previous response to Question 1.

3. What are your view on the Committee's detailed priorities/outline programme of work for Years 3 to 5 of the Sixth Senedd (set out in its report, Priorities for the Sixth Senedd?)

With the Welsh Government's commitment to legislation to introduce statutory biodiversity targets and an independent environmental governance body for Wales, we trust the development of this legislation (including scrutiny of the White Paper later this year) will be high on the Committee's agenda. The Committee's work to date on biodiversity, including nature recovery targets, and on the governance gap, has been very welcome.

Also in the coming year the Welsh Government will be developing its response to the new Global Biodiversity Framework, including a refreshed Nature Recovery Action Plan and Natural Resources Policy, and further development of the commitments made through the Biodiversity Deep Dive. The Committee's scrutiny of these plans and policies will be very welcome; we would urge, in particular, consideration of the resourcing and delivery of the actions committed to. As the Wales Environment Link report Pathways to 2030 highlights (<https://waleslink.org/pathways-to-2030-10-key-areas-for-investment-in-natures-recovery-across-wales/>), there is currently a significant gap in investment and resources compared to what is needed to tackle the nature emergency. Post legislative scrutiny of the implementation of the Environment (Wales) Act may also help the Committee to identify challenges with delivery, and lessons to be learned for the forthcoming legislation.

We would urge the Committee to include consideration of marine issues. We welcome the focus on marine spatial planning highlighted throughout the programme and would encourage continued emphasis on this, given the pressure on marine space and nature from development.

We also encourage the Committee to consider whether the final proposals for the Sustainable Farming Scheme (to be made public before the end of this year) will be effective in supporting Welsh farmers to produce food sustainably and help tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

4. To what extent are the Committee's detailed priorities/outline programme of work still relevant, reflecting on social, economic and environmental developments since they were set at the start of the Sixth Senedd?

Addressed in response to previous questions.

5. Are there any other matters related to the Committee's priorities/work programme/ways of working that you would like to comment on?

The Committee should keep under continued review the long-term outcomes of the Senedd's work under the Green Recovery framework, in particular the ongoing work regarding the establishment of a Nature Service Wales. While the immediate demands that arose from the Covid pandemic, and therefore the commitments under the Green Recovery framework, have now passed, there remains a clear need to invest in nature-based green jobs and skills across Wales to ensure a future Wales has the expertise and workforce available to build towards and meet the demands of a net zero, nature positive economy by 2030.

6. Other information

No response.
