



Ein cyf/Our ref: OQ58599

8 November 2022

Dear all,

I am writing to you because, during Senedd questions on 25 October, the issues of managing road verges and amenity grasslands, and UK Government Investment Zones in North Wales were raised.

I congratulate you for the efforts that you are making to adopt 'cut and collect' grass cutting regimes, helping green spaces under your management to be more biodiverse and help combat the nature emergency. I am delighted Local Places for Nature funding is helping you manage land to allow rare and common wildflowers the best possible chance of establishing.

This work to support wildlife, now more than ever, is critically important because biodiversity is declining, with one in six species in Wales at risk of disappearing. Changing mowing on road verges and amenity areas also gives people an opportunity to become more connected with nature and see wildflowers.

Wildflower-rich amenity areas and verges, and their importance for pollinators and other wildlife, are becoming increasingly appreciated. However, some residents and road users see them as untidy and neglected. To show Welsh Government support and to increase awareness that changing mowing is about saving wildlife, we have developed the 'It's for Them' campaign. It has a range of resources which can be used to engage with local residents and community groups about changes to mowing practices. You can customize the resources by adding your logos and contact details. They can be found here: <https://gov.wales/its-them-campaign-stakeholder-toolkit>.

In terms of Investment Zones, the detail and information provided so far on the UK Government's proposals has been limited. As we begin to work with the UK Government to understand the proposals, we will want to understand the potential implications for Wales. We are firmly seeking assurance that Investment Zones, like Freeports, would align with Welsh Government policies around fair work and sustainability and a commitment to developing a shared understanding of how that would work in practice.

The planning system is devolved to Welsh Ministers. Any Investment Zones proposal would need to respect the existing Welsh planning legislative and policy framework. Future 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.

and Planning Policy Wales (PPW) provide a comprehensive framework for supporting the needs of communities and guiding development and growth to the right places whilst protecting nature and supporting its recovery. Local planning authorities must act in accordance with Future Wales and PPW and in doing so put placemaking, ecosystem resilience and well-being at the heart of their decisions.

A copy of this letter is being sent to Chief Executives in Ynys Mon, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

MARK DRAKEFORD