



Adam Price MS
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14 December 2021

Annwyl Adam,

I am writing further to your questions during First Ministers' Questions last week in relation to investments made by Giles Thorley since taking up post as CEO of the Development Bank of Wales (DBW).

Following reports in The Western Mail's BusinessLive section on 25 November, which questioned whether Mr Thorley should be making investments in Welsh companies and your questions last week, I have raised the issue with the chair of DBW and Welsh Government officials.

Mr Thorley has made two investments in Welsh companies during his time as CEO of DBW:

- An investment into Zip World in 2019, which also involved taking up a non-executive position as chair of the board. As required, authorisation for the appointment was sought and obtained in advance. As an additional step the founder of Zip World sought further agreement from the then Economy Minister.
- A small seed investment into technology start-up LoveToVisit in 2021. The chair of DBW was informed about the transaction post-investment. Mr Thorley has no involvement in the management of the business.

The advice I have received sets out the existing governance approach alongside consolidating steps the board of DBW has taken. These go well beyond the requirements of the Companies Act and standard financial regulation protocols. It also provides assurances that no improper actions have been taken in respect of Mr Thorley's investments.

As an organisation responsible for managing public funds, DBW is subject to considerable scrutiny, including by Senedd committees. Both internal and external audit reports for 2020-21 and the views of the independent Project Assessment Review (July 2021) support the

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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.

view that the controls being applied by DBW conform to the requirements of propriety and of good financial management and that robust arrangements are in place to monitor compliance.

I am satisfied with the assurances I have received from the chair and Welsh Government officials of the governance and control of DBW's affairs by the board. On that basis, I have concluded that the threshold for a review of governance has not been reached on this occasion.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD