Dear Andrew RT Davies AM,

Further to your recent Written Assembly Question’s please see my responses below:

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** Will the Minister outline what resources the Welsh Government has provided to support local-level implementation of the Marine Protected Area Network Management Framework for Wales 2018–2023, including local marine biodiversity conservation staffing outside of Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales? (WAQ77920) (e)

**Lesley Griffiths:** *The management of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) is a responsibility shared by management authorities across Wales. Management authorities are those organisations that have statutory obligations to manage Welsh seas or are significant seabed and coastal land owners.*

I have written to all management authorities across Wales setting out our collective statutory obligations towards MPA management, including implementation of the Marine Protected Area Network Management Framework. Furthermore the Welsh Government continues to provide leadership and support for the collective delivery of MPA management through the MPA Management Steering Group. However it is for management authorities to decide how they wish to meet their statutory responsibilities, including the level of resource they allocate to them.
Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide a statement on the Welsh Government’s 2019-2020 budget allocation to Natural Resources Wales to deliver its marine monitoring programme, and how this differs from previous years, given the recent increase in statutory marine nature conservation responsibilities within the offshore area? (WAQ77921)

Lesley Griffiths: Natural Resources Wales’s Grant in Aid for 2019-2020 is £57.1m. The Welsh Government expects Natural Resources Wales to deliver its marine monitoring programme through this core funding, as in previous years.

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister detail how forthcoming Welsh Government-funded research into fish stocks in Welsh waters will be utilised within marine biodiversity conservation and marine spatial planning? (WAQ77923) (e)

Lesley Griffiths: A project has been commissioned to identify and prioritise evidence needs for fish stocks in Welsh waters. The report from the project will guide the programme of evidence gathering, analysis and reporting that will be carried out to build an improved evidence base for Welsh waters. In turn this will help guide the Welsh Government’s post-EU exit marine and fisheries policies and management.

Regards,

Lesley Griffiths

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ynni, Cynllunio a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs