

Dear xxx,

Thank you for bringing these further queries to my attention. I have consulted the relevant members of my team further and can provide the following information in response:

“The paragraph on vegetation clearance is written as if the clearance has not yet happened. There are some clear discrepancies between Mr Price’s response on what should happen and the reality of what has happened, namely: the BAP speaks about creating log piles and only removing trees where essential. I have seen no evidence as to why it was essential to remove certain vegetation behind my property but not at other points further along the line (which are actually closer to the line). It may interest Mr Price to know that all of the vegetation along this particular stretch was fed through a chipper as a matter of course and turned to sawdust rather than log piles being created. We received a letter from TFW the day before the works occurred stating that material would either be chipped or removed from site so I’m really not sure why Mr Price is telling you that TFW would be making log piles from arisings. This feels misleading and disingenuous. I would appreciate Mr Price’s views on this particular discrepancy.”

A: Log piles are left where ground conditions permit (i.e., on level ground) so not to pose threat of debris either rolling or being blown onto track. Locations are also assessed for trespass/vandalism potential, as there have been previous incidents whereby members of the public have trespassed to take advantage of logs that were being stockpiled on site prior to removal. Permission is required from the relevant Amey Infrastructure Wales (AIW) project manager prior to leaving log piles on site to ensure this criteria is satisfied.

“The BAP, and Mr Price’s response speaks about creating an ecological ‘asset database’ but as you know (and as Mr Price confirms in his response) this has not yet been produced before the works were undertaken. Surely this should have been done before ecological assets were destroyed along this stretch of the line. This is surely unacceptable and is likely to have resulted in valuable ecological assets being removed without full consideration and scrutiny of their value. Can Mr Price confirm that the works should not have been undertaken until this key database was produced?”

A: TfW has a no-net-loss requirement to achieve by 2024, therefore the ecological assets database does not apply to vegetation clearance undertaken to this date nor is this exercise a standard or legal requirement. All habitats were subject to a full ecological assessment and EIA before being removed to ensure appropriate mitigation was in place with Natural Resources Wales.

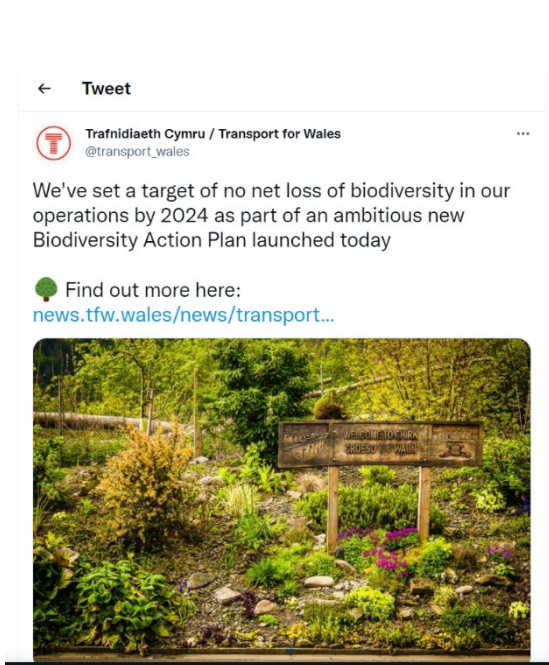
“The BAP states: ‘We’ll be explicit and transparent about the duration, scale and reasons for our operations and associated work, which will be communicated through a variety of means including bespoke weblinks on our website and through our social media platforms. These will include detailed information on what to expect, and how any given area of our work ties into this plan.’ I can share every communication that we have received from TFW but I don’t recall seeing any reference to the BAP in any of it. Again, Mr Price’s email seems inaccurate and misleading, and I’d be grateful for his clarification as to where the BAP was referred in any comms relating to this work?”

A: The BAP was only released two months ago so therefore was not referred to in any of the previous communications though it was shared on social media around the time of its launch.

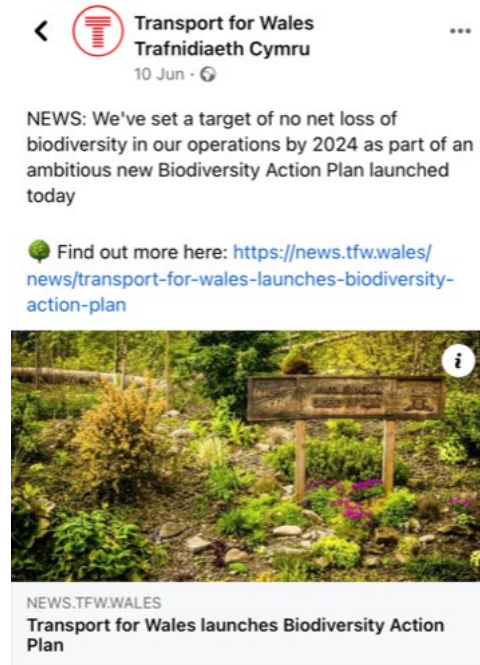
“Moreover, I’ve reviewed the TFW Facebook page and can see no posts at all referring to the works on the Coryton line (11th July) let alone any posts referring to the BAP. Please can Mr Price confirm when these social media posts referencing the BAP were issued?”

Again, his email to you does not seem to correlate to the reality of what his organisation is doing on the ground."

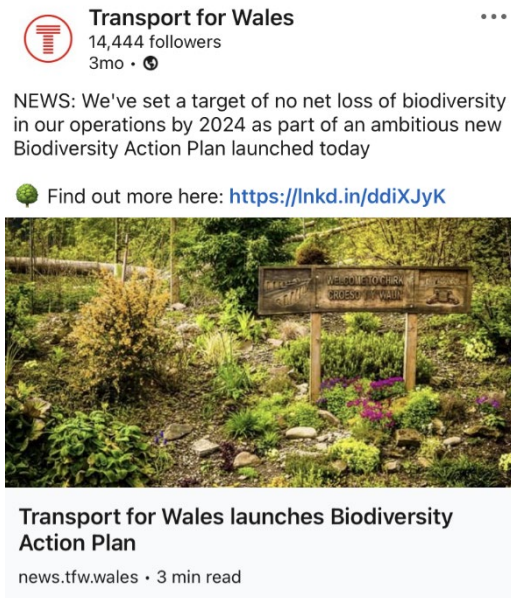
The BAP was promoted on Twitter on the 15th June, and on Facebook on the 10th June. We also promoted the Plan on LinkedIn and it was picked up by several local newspapers.



Twitter



Facebook



LinkedIn



Wales 247 News

“2. Carbon emissions impact: Mr Price’s response very specifically refers to net zero carbon operationally but avoids the actual question which I raised... namely, what is the overall impact on carbon emissions when construction, vegetation clearance, installation, manufacture and decommissioning are taken into account. I am assuming that this means that no such assessment has been conducted by TFW, and that the honest answer is that they don’t know. If not, I would be more reassured if they were willing to share this assessment with me. The point Mr Price raises around WGs decarbonisation of the transport network are probably more appropriate to be directed at WG rather than at TFW, but my understanding of the CCC report referenced is that it largely considered the electrification of lines related to freight, and other rail references purely refer to ‘decarbonisation’ rather than ‘decarbonisation operationally’. If this is the case then my earlier comments re. total carbon costs of these works are still relevant.”

A: Any studies specifically relating to the comparison of carbon emissions of the construction of the metro versus the loss of carbon storage from de-vegetation would have been undertaken by Welsh Government previous to the creation of Transport for Wales. It is highly unlikely that this exercise was carried out as significant resource would have been required to map all of the vegetation on the Core Valleys Lines to undertake this calculation.

We are however required to do this as part of our ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity target there is more detail on this below.

Plants store a finite amount of carbon so whilst they create some capture over time there would be no continual absorption of additional carbon. The calculation for the construction work would have been estimated as the emissions would need to take into account the location of procurement of items such as steel and the equipment required on site.

The metro project will hugely reduce the amount of carbon being emitted by public transport, it will also offer more opportunities for people to shift their mode of travel from private vehicle to public transport This will have a significant impact, the target we are working towards was issued in our most recent Remit Letter from Welsh Government: ‘to achieve net zero Carbon emissions for all TfW direct operations and transport operations supported by funding administered by TfW on behalf of the Welsh Ministers (e.g. buses, trains, facilities and back office operations) by 2030’.

To reduce the emissions of the work we are carrying out on site we are utilising solar generators, solar CCTV and Solar Lighting.

“The sustainable development plan states that all employees will have undertaken “environmental awareness training”. Given the video that I have of the works being undertaken I would be grateful if Mr Price could confirm that this training was actually undertaken.”

Environmental, ecology and sustainable development training is undertaken frequently within Transport for Wales and is required from our partners and all of our employees receive a briefing on induction to the organisation. We have rolled out the IEMA Foundation Course in Environmental Management recently and we will be offering Carbon Literacy Training to all employees shortly.

“The sustainable development plan states that: Our Environmental Manager will carry out compliance checks to ensure all regulatory approvals and licences are in place prior to commencing maintenance and construction works. Can Mr Price please share the outcome of the environmental manager’s checks in relation to this part of the line.”

All required consents and permits are currently in place; these include S61 Notices for Noise and all Ecology Permits and Licenses. We are audited externally by auditors from Groundwork Wales in connection with our Green Dragon Environmental Management System. We have recently undertaken all required approvals and licenses are in place ready for our next external audit in October.

“Finally, Mr Price notes that TFW are “actively reviewing opportunities to plant as close to affected areas as possible”. Conveniently there is land behind TFWs fence line which is occupied by myself and my neighbours and we would be more than happy to offer access to this to TFW to plant suitably mature trees if this was of interest. Of course, we would want to reinstate mature trees rather than whips which I’m sure Mr Price would agree is the most appropriate way to start to minimise the ecological damage. I’m happy for TFW to visit the property and arrange this planting ASAP. Please can he confirm that this will be done.”

Whilst we would love to give trees to private householders or on privately owned land to replace vegetation lost, we are unable to do this. The funding that we have is public money and there are regulations on how this is spent. However, we have been applying for funding for greening projects and have been successful in achieving a £100,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We have been spending this grant money on green features, are working to improve 22 stations, and are working with five community groups where we have installed planters and trees to improve the local environment. We would like to continue this work with community groups, and we are currently putting together a Community Woodland Grant application.

I hope this information is of use to your constituent, if there is anything further I can do to assist, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Kind regards,

[Signature]