**Cangen Dŵr / Water Branch**
**Adran Dŵr a Llifogydd / Water & Flood Division**
**Grŵp Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig**
**Climate Change & Rural Affairs Group**

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: TO/HIDCC/00301/26

[redacted]

March 2026

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 February regarding your concerns about Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) following Channel 4's docu-series Dirty Water, to the First Minister, Eluned Morgan, and Huw Irranca-Davies MS the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. I have been asked to respond on behalf of the Welsh Ministers.

The Dirty Business series exposed serious failures in wastewater management and environmental protection, and we fully recognise the strength of public feeling generated by the programme. The Welsh Government takes these issues extremely seriously. Sewage pollution is unacceptable, and the documentary reinforced the importance of the work already under way in Wales by the water industry, regulators, government, rivers trusts and citizen scientists to improve river and coastal water quality.

Water and sewerage services in Wales operate within a different regulatory system from that shown in the programme, which focused primarily on events in England. In Wales, water companies are required to invest significantly in upgrading wastewater and storm overflow systems, and this work is closely scrutinised by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). We work with NRW, Ofwat and the sector to target the most harmful overflows, backed by over £1.1 billion of investment up to 2030. We have provided NRW with an additional £5 million in 2025–26 to strengthen regulation and enforcement. Currently, we are working with NRW on the 2026–27 programme to build long-term capability, modernise enforcement and support sustainable, catchment-based solutions that enhance water quality. Together, these measures reflect our continued commitment to strengthening environmental protections in Wales and ensuring sustained improvements to river and coastal water quality.

You asked about the appointment of Sir James Bevan as a Non-Executive Director of Glas Cymru, which owns DCWW. Glas Cymru is a private company and the Welsh Government is not responsible for who they choose to appoint to their board of directors.

DCWW have stated that Sir James Bevan was appointed as a Non-Executive Director in 2025 following a rigorous and transparent appointments process. His experience of regulation and environmental pressures has strengthened the Board's oversight as the company delivers its largest ever investment programme between 2025 and 2030, which includes improving river and bathing water quality. Unlike other water and sewage utility companies operating in the UK, DCWW do not have shareholders and therefore do not pay out profit dividends. They take their environmental and public health responsibility seriously, while working to deliver the environmental improvements that are required.

Thank you for highlighting the slurry incident that affected the Castell stream. You noted that NRW attended at the time but that you have not yet received any update. NRW have since explained the incident reported to them on 12 May 2025 was attended by the local team within an hour. The investigation substantiated the pollution report and evidence samples were collected. The pollution was caused by an accidental spillage of slurry when a coupling on the umbilical system failed, resulting in an uncontrolled discharge. Officers returned the following day once the residual slurry had cleared. No dead fish or other ecological impacts were observed. After careful consideration, NRW's legal team did not support proceeding with a formal caution, and no further action was taken. The reporter did not request feedback at the time, so no follow-up contact was provided. I hope this information helps to clarify the actions taken and the outcome of the incident.

The Welsh Government introduced the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations) (Wales) Regulations 2021 to address concerns relating pollution from agricultural sources and introduced new requirements for the use and storage of manures and slurries. Agricultural pollution is having a significant, detrimental impact on our environment and insufficient slurry storage and poor practice in relation to spreading has been identified as one of the main causes. The Welsh Government has increased the inspection programme for the enforcement of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations. With £1.58m committed for NRW's enforcement of the Regulations in the 2025-26 financial year, which targets high-risk agricultural activities including the spreading of slurry. Whilst the incident noted above was an accidental spillage relating to the failure of equipment the wider enforcement approach is leading to change within the sector and compliance levels are improving. But there is further work to do.

We recognise the concern locally about the frequency and impact of storm overflow discharges, particularly from Trefin Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) into Aberfelin. The site is operated by DCWW and monitored by NRW throughout the year. NRW reports that the works storm overflow discharges frequently during wet weather. As required by the environmental permit for the facility, Trefin has the capacity to treat the volume of effluent it receives, and the treated discharge meets required water quality standards. However, the sewer network is affected by infiltration, where rainwater enters the system and puts pressure on capacity. DCWW will be investigating where this infiltration is occurring and put measures in place to reduce it. NRW will continue to actively pursue a timely upgrade to the sewer network.

In November 2025 Trefin WwTW received a formal notification from NRW after reports of odour and discolouration in Trefin. No issues were identified. The site was spilling at the time due to wet weather, but incoming flows were within permit conditions. Current information shows the storm overflow is working normally, and no further issues have been identified.

You noted that you were unable to access the Storm Overflow Discharges map on dwrcymru.com. DCWW have assured us that the map is fully functioning and should have been operating as expected.
Improving the condition of Welsh rivers and coastal waters is a long-term priority for the Welsh Government. The concerns raised in Dirty Business reinforce the need for continued transparency, strong regulation, and targeted investment.

Thank you for writing to us on this important matter and we hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Water Branch
**Climate Change & Rural Affairs Group**
**Welsh Government**