



TO: Business Wales - Attention of Management Board

RE: Rejection Letter for ERF Funding

28 June 2021

Dear Business Wales

We write collectively on behalf of a Welsh business, a shoot, which has recently received a rejection letter for an application for funding through the Economic Resilience Fund (ERF).

The applicant to which we refer has previously been in receipt of ERF funding during the Covid-19 outbreak. The rejection letter to this grant funding application, sent to the applicant on 8 June 2021, states:

*“Following initial appraisal of your ERF application further due diligence checks identified the business is related to blood sport activity which as noted does not align with Welsh Government policy. The Welsh Government does not support activity that may lead to animal cruelty as a leisure activity.”*

We note the list of business activities that are deemed ineligible for funding under the scheme. The business of the applicant in question does not involve any of these activities and has already received ERF funding. We can therefore only assume that it now falls under the reference to “bringing the Welsh Government into disrepute”.

Is it being suggested that legal activities and the associated businesses in Wales can bring the Welsh Government into disrepute?

If a business is legal then it should be treated no differently from any other legal business and equally under the law. These businesses are people’s livelihoods and to differentiate between lawful businesses in this way is the same as treating individuals differently before the law.

Shooting is a lawful activity. It therefore should not be discriminated against provided it is undertaken safely and in line with legislative requirements. Shooting offers a valid and valuable business enterprise, inextricably associated with conservation of both landscape and species, which creates highly-skilled, secure jobs, a valuable food product in game and is a key part of Wales’ rural culture.

We are therefore seeking clarification on several issues:

1. Why this lawful activity and business has been discriminated against and on what grounds?
2. What decision-making process is in place to decide if a business would bring the Welsh Government into disrepute? Please could you provide copies of any policy documents on which this decision was based, including any other material that was used in the formulation of this position.
3. In addition, do you have an official list of businesses that fall into this category and, if not, who decides whether a business receives a rejection for an ERF funding application?

We look forward to your response.

Liam Bell, Chairman  
National Gamekeepers’ Organisation

Rachel Evans, Director for Wales,  
Countryside Alliance

Liam Stokes, Chief Executive,  
British Game Alliance

Steve Griffiths, Director of Wales,  
British Association of Shooting & Conservation

George Davis, Chairman  
Game Farmers’ Association

Charles de Winton, Rural Surveyor,  
Country Land & Business Association