

Ymgyrch Diogelu Cymru Wledig Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales



Minutes for the Seventh Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs
Seminar room 1 & 2,
Pierhead Building, National Assembly for Wales
4th November 2014

Review of the Governance of Protected Landscapes in Wales

Present:

Acting Chair:

William Powell – Liberal Democrat (LD)

Secretariat:

Cat Griffith-Williams - The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)

Apologies

Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM (Chair)

Present

Assembly Members & AMSS:

Russell George AM (Con),
Craig Lawton – AMSS Suzy Davies

Invited speaker

Professor Terry Marsden - Director of Cardiff University's Sustainable Places Research Institute, Independent Chair-Designated Landscapes Review Panel

In attendance:

Peter Ogden – CPRW,
Dr Roisin Willmott, RTPI (Cymru),
Edward Holdaway – Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast NP & Alliance of NP Cymru,
Andrew Stumpf – Glandŵr Cymru,
Greg Pycroft – Welsh Government,
Andrew Tamplin – Post Office LTD,
Laura Lewis – Canal & River Trust,
Rebecca Brough – Ramblers Cymru,
Jim Wilson – Brecon Beacons Parks Society,
Tegryn Jones – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority / National Parks Wales
Jo Wall –TACP,
Martin Bishop – Confor,
David Powell – Confor,
Rachel Lewis-Davies – National Farmers Union,
Charles de Winton – CLA
Graham Burrows Scottish Campaign for National Parks,
Carole Rothwell – Natural Resources Wales,
Howard Sutcliffe – Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB



Beverley Penney – Open Spaces Society,
Melanie Doel – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Siobhan Wiltshire Planning Division Welsh Government,
Ruth Bradshaw – Campaign for National Parks
Emily Keenen – National Trust Wales
Rachael Sharp – Wildlife Trust
Madeline Harvard – Natural Resources Wales

1 Review of the Governance of Protected Landscapes in Wales

- 1.1 William Powell AM offered the current Chair Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM's, apologies for being unable to be present, explaining he would act as Chair for this meeting. He welcomed everybody and opened the meeting by introducing Professor Terry Marsden, the main speaker.
- 1.2 Professor Terry Marsden indicated how pleased he was to have been invited to Chair this review of designated areas in Wales and noted how important it was that these areas are protected and function in an appropriate policy context. He highlighted need to develop approaches which reflect the role and relevance of these designated areas as exemplars of Sustainable development.
- 1.3 He outlined the two distinct phases of the review with the conclusions of the first Phase being reported to the Minister by the end of January 2015 before the second phase commenced thereafter. It was anticipated that the Panel's work would be completed and its overall conclusions presented to the Minister by the end of July 2015.
- 1.4 Phase 1 would focus on two issues; the Purposes of all Protected landscapes and the proposition of a single Protected Landscape designation. He indicated that the scope of this part of the Inquiry was likely to focus on what changes if any are necessary to make the current Purposes of National Parks and AONBs fit for purpose? What pressures are there on these Protected Landscapes at the moment and how might these change in the next two generations? What consideration should be given to conservation as opposed to preservation and how these purposes might be affected in the light of any change in emphasis in CAP and the changing fortunes of the farming communities in these areas. He also highlighted any such changes might trigger the need to reappraise the scope of the existing Sandford principle and the hierarchal priority it currently provides to the conservation purpose of Protected Landscapes.
 - 1.4.1 So far as the overall organisational approach to Protected Landscape



Management, Phase 1 would also be considering the merits of a single designation for all National Parks and AONBs.

- 1.5 He confirmed that under the Terms of Reference for the Review, the Panel had not been asked to consider the prospects to increasing the number of designated areas but essentially whether they are fit for current day purposes. He did however believe that the exercise should consider how any refreshed role for Protected Landscapes could provide an uplift for the improvement of circumstances beyond the boundaries of existing designated areas in other parts of Wales.
- 1.6 He also believed it was important that the Review recognised the need for integration with other policy realms which were currently being formulated in the context of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill and the Environment Bill.

2. Professor Marsden opened the discussion and invited views from the floor.

- 2.1 **Peter Ogden – CPRW**, asked if it could be assumed that the existing twin ‘purposes’ of National Parks and the single purpose of AONBs are not in question?

Professor Marsden confirmed he is taking an open mind on all relevant matters and confirmed that whilst it was unlikely that the ‘principles’ behind the current purposes will change, it would still be important to ensure that the way they are expressed still remains appropriate. That he believed was the Minister’s overall objective of this Review.

- 2.2 In addition Professor Marsden also referred to the need to consider if and how the question of ecosystems services should be reflected in the Purposes and likewise the definition of the term nature conservation and its many component parts including its relationship to the second existing public awareness and educative purpose.
- 2.3 **Howard Sutcliffe - Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB**, highlighted the unpredictable nature of the grant aid that AONBs rely upon to deliver their work, especially with Local Authority funding being under threat. He highlighted the need to equalise the funding formula for all Protected Landscapes so that AONBs were not disadvantaged and the possibility of strengthening their brand recognition to match that of National Parks.
- 2.4 **Rachael Sharp – Wildlife Trust**; noted that the general public’s opinion about the role of Protected Landscapes might be different from the professional. She suggested that the Review Panel might wish to consider the potential to look to and provide for the conservation needs future and take a holistic view



of what this would mean in terms of additional designations. The example of the Cambrian Mts was mentioned and the other important natural assets Wales possesses.

Professor Marsden reiterated that he has not been tasked to look at new designations but acknowledged that there is an overlap of issues. He anticipated that the Panel may wish consider the issue of extending designations and that the brief he has been given has encouraged the Panel to think radically.

- 2.5 **David Powell – Confor** discussed the subject of ‘principles’ and questioned whether they are irreplaceable. He asked if the 1948 Act could be changed would there be a desire to change the ‘objects clause’.

Professor Marsden responded by indicating that the issue of how one deals with social and economic development will be an important element of their considerations. He emphasised the issue of how Protected Landscape might contribute to rural vibrancy, the welfare of rural communities and economic development, all of which were within the remit of the Review. He highlighted the fact that many National Parks are now actively engaged with community based renewable energy schemes. He emphasised the need to get away from the dichotomy of environment verses development and to think more realistically about what development is important to create the best set of outcomes for all interests.

- 2.6 **Edward Holdaway – Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast NP & Alliance of NP Cymru.** Questioned who any future purposes were aimed at, the local communities of PLs or the nation as a whole. He felt both should be taken fully into account

He also Expressed his concern regarding the limited national leadership for Protected Landscapes which currently existed despite the fact that it was clear that the public believe designated areas are fundamentally important to them and to Wales as a nation.

He made a plea for the Review to consider the relationships between the land and the sea in particular as the qualities of many of the coastal Protected landscapes derive their special qualities from their connections with the sea. He hoped that the Review would make recommendations regarding the extension of the boundaries of coastal Protected Landscapes out to sea

Professor Marsden said he will be looking at the Marine Planning side.



- 2.7 **Charles de Winton – Country Landowners Association.** In welcoming the Review he noted that National Parks are a “Big and important Brand”

The role of economic development within these areas should be looked at carefully especially from the perspective of those people who manage the landscape.

Professor Marsden acknowledged that any overarching agricultural policy would have a significant effect on land use in these areas and the importance to therefore of establishing national institutions which created synergy between the public, private and civic sectors. In noting the changing nature of the agricultural sector he emphasised the importance of complementarity in the context of agricultural land management.

- 2.8 **Tegryn Jones – Chief Executive PCNPA** and also **National Parks Cymru** Welcomed the review and recognised the time has come for change. He highlighted the lack of ownership in Wales of Welsh National Parks.

Notwithstanding this, he specifically asked as to the scope of the Panel to consider and make recommendations about the role of the National Parks in the Development and land use planning system

Professor Marsden clarified that whilst the Terms of Reference of the Review did not include this, he had been informed that the Minister will be making an announcement about National Parks and the planning bill. This announcement would have a bearing on Phase 2 of the Panel’s work. He also noted that it would be insensitive for the Panel not to ignore any views which are made on this issue and convey these to the Minister, to help inform future decisions.

- 2.9 **Natalie Rees** suggested that it would be important for the Review panel to link into Peter Davies’ public consultations work on the Futures Generation Bill, through the process of the National Conversation: “The Wales we want”

- 2.10 **Andrew Stumpf** – Glandŵr Cymru suggested the Review panel look into the ‘Deep Place study’ and avoid any temptation to seek quick wins. He emphasised the importance and value of good long term thinking and the need to ensure that any change brings added value to the present circumstances

Professor Marsden invited suggestions of the types of good practice which illustrated this and in particular the Panel would welcome examples of activities, relationships and practices which are currently working well.



- 2.10 **Madeline Harvard** – Natural Resources Wales; noted that as Phase One of the review doesn't end until late January 2015 and Phase 2 will not be completed until June/July 2015, how will the outcomes of both Phases influence the content of the various Bills currently under consideration. As importantly how will this work relate to the work associated with the National Development Framework proposed under the Planning Bill. She expressed a specific concern that it was of concern and worrying that all these issues would not join up.

Prof Marsden responded by saying that the parameters for this study were set by the Minister who was responsible for all three of these Bills mentioned.

- 2.11 **Carys Howells**, Noted the need for the Review to take a long term view and decisions on what needs to happen in 50-100 years into the future. Once this has been decided then short term priorities should be easier to identify. She suggested looking at the good examples of what is working well throughout the world would be helpful for the Panel to consider. In this respect the role and contribution that Wales' Protected Landscapes can make to the nation's health agenda was acknowledged as being important.

- 2.12 **William Powell AM**, Before having to leave the Acting Chair of the Group suggested that the Panel consider how the Protected Landscapes could better reach out to new audiences and in particular to young people.

Prof Marsden confirmed this was an issue which the Panel was mindful of and it would form part of their deliberations.

- 2.13 **Beverley Penney** – Open Spaces Society, asked for clarification as to the closing date by which public submissions to the Panel needed to be lodged.

It was confirmed that the closing date for the receipt of any further submissions was 27th November 2014 and that the Welsh Government would be collating these and acting as the Secretariat for their collation.

A series of independently facilitated Stakeholder meetings would also be taking place during the period from the 10th -14th November

- 2.14 **Ruth Bradshaw** – Campaign for National Parks, Shared the good practice of the 'Mosaic' program in Wales and suggested that further contact could be facilitated through this work should the Review Panel wish to reach and gauge the views of ethnic minority groups.

This invitation was acknowledged



- 2.15 In a final period of discussion the feelings was registered that there was still unfinished business with respect the designation of further Protected Landscapes in Wales and it was hoped that the Panel would reflect on this matter especially if there was a desire for National Parks and AONBs to become hubs of natural resource management and sustainable development.
- 2.16 **Peter Ogden – CPRW**, pointed out that the European Landscape Convention stipulates that all landscapes matter and highlighted the need for the outcomes of the Review to ensure that Protected Landscapes are realistically connected to their surrounding landscapes, especially if the problems of habitat and landscape fragmentation are to be halted and reversed. He believed that all the benefits which National Parks and AONB provide should more obviously flow outwards beyond their boundaries in the future.

3. Closing remarks

- 3.1 The members of the Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs all thanked William Powell AM for stepping in to Chair the meeting.
- 3.2 The meeting closed with further thanks offered to Professor Marsden for his informative and helpful overview of the forthcoming Review and to everyone who had attended for their contributions.
- 3.3 The offer was made that should a further meeting of this Group provide a helpful forum to introduce and assist the work of the Second Phase of the Panel's work, this suggestion would be discussed with the Chair of the CPG group and a meeting arranged at a suitable time in the early New Year.

The meeting ended at 13.30