

Meeting Note

Environment and Rural Affairs Roundtable Land Use Working Group

Welsh Government Llandrindod Wells Office, Spa Road East, Llandrindod
Wells, LD1 5HA

19 May 2017

Attendees:

WG 1 Chair
WG 2
WG 3
WG 4
WG 5
WG 6
WG 7
WG 8
CAAV
CONFOR
FUW
Dwy Cymru
HCC
Amaeth Cymru
WLGA
Wildlife Trust
TFA
RSPB Cymru
NFU
CLA
NRW
NRW
Woodland Trust
CCRI
PPIW
Wales Advisory Tourism Organisation
Afonydd Cymru
National Trust

Apologies:

WG 9
Severn Wye Energy Association
CAAV
Coed Cymru
RSPB Cymru
Woodland Trust
Wales Advisory Tourism Organisation

Introduction

WG official 1 welcomed the attendees and explained the scope of the meeting was to inform a land use policy position post CAP. The group were invited to share their thoughts on the scope of the group and the following issues were raised:

- The Terms of Reference are to be amended to include the role of this Group in terms of the First Minister's Roundtable Group.
- Any replacement to the CAP must be administratively simple.
- There needs to be a joint vision on what we wish to achieve.
- Legislation needs to be reviewed to ensure it is sufficient to enforce new practices.
- A shared folder housing all related documentation which can be accessed by the group should be developed.

Sector Presentations

There followed 5 sector presentations on their view of the industry and there were questions from the Group following each.

Amaeth Cymru official – Agriculture

Issues raised by the group:

- Importance of ensuring imports from other countries have similar standards in food production and welfare to Wales.
- Further work is needed to improve supply chains
- The farming industry needs support to improve efficiency.
- Intensification of stocking levels is expected if support levels are reduced and the environment needs to be protected.

CONFOR official– Forestry

Issues raised by the group:

- Agriculture and Forestry need to work better together rather than be seen as opposing each other.
- Incentives for landowners to grow trees paid on an annual basis will encourage more to go down this route.
- Forestry and tourism need to work in tandem with access rights for the public to visit private woodland areas
- Possible PES payments could be made to move forests from peatlands and into scrub places on common land.
- 95% of forestry is currently in a managed state.

Dwr Cymru official – Water

Issues raised by the group:

- There is no joined up agriculture/water policy throughout the world; this needs to be addressed.
- Significant investment in pipes/water treatment works infrastructure is required to make water transfer more efficient.

Wildlife Trust official - Environment

Issues raised by the group:

- Agriculture should still be supported; consumers want to buy cheaper food and the impact on the environment is not a deciding factor for most consumers.
- There will either be lower environmental standards or food prices will need to increase.
- A 'shallow and broad' approach is needed to cover all of Wales rather than 'narrow and deep' as detailed in the presentation.
- Correct brokerage is critical for an PES scheme with the right market mechanism.
- A de-regulation agenda is a threat to the environment.

Workshop session

The workshop session asked one person from each table to answer the following questions and relate it to their sector:

- How can your sector help deliver opportunities highlighted by other sectors during the morning sessions presentations?
- How can sectors work together and how can you make these connections?
- What evidence or information is currently missing for the work of this group?

Table 1 – Forestry

Opportunities:

- Brexit will accelerate trends and enterprises will become less standardly modular
- Employment increases as a large increase in forestry will require more forestry managers; some breeds now have 15 year rotations which require more guidance.
- More UK factories to produce timber will reduce imports.
- Flood prevention through creation of forests

Working together:

- Communication needs to be improved; some farmers regard forestry 'as an enemy not a friend'
- Area Statements are key to joined up working
- Archaeological areas to be involved to resolve planting issues on their sites.

What evidence is needed?

- Farmers need evidence to show if forestry can be more profitable.

Table 2 – Fishing industry

Opportunities:

- Increase tourism in hotels around rivers.
- Improve flood defences.
- Legislation must incentivise good behaviour rather than punish bad.
- VAT from fishing goes back into land use.
- 20 years of PES activity already
- Third sector organisation – collaboration, partnership is already working
- “Wild” fishing systems which farmers can access if they have streams or farm is around a stream – it makes them look after the water quality.
- PES type –potential to carry forward into NHS – through access to the environment. It could be directed into prevention of health issues by providing this access.
- River restoration – needs to be improved as there isn't a link to give a guide to show the patients the countryside, not enough communication around what is available.
- WG funding needs to be re-assessed to include this type of activity
- Assistance to expand from WG
- Core funding
- Delivery platform to help organisations to work together – pilot testing to judge what maintenance is needed going forward.
- Need a joint vision to ensure all work together with the steps detailing how it is delivered.
- Corporate sponsorship could help fund e.g. use of their logo on produce/advertising
- River restoration barrier funding

Working together:

- Need a resource to bring all work/groups together.
- Market/Society testing.
- Social events to build bridges/relationships.
- Co-ordination of funding – third/private/public sector working together to make the most of what is available.

What evidence is needed?

- Economic evidence such as tourism gain versus the costs to re-address damage
- Cultural evidence – what we have then/now.
- Potential growth of the sector

Table 3 - Water

Opportunities:

- Joined up working to optimise benefits
- Sustainable future for all
- Protection of designated areas
- Exploring PES schemes
- Building recreational facilities on land

- Creation of 'Brand Wales'
- Integrated communications between all sectors. This relies on getting the outcomes clear from the beginning.

Working together:

- Clear direction is needed to discuss what is currently being done and by who.

What evidence is needed:

- A regulatory floor should be enforced.
- Examples of best practice.
- How do to monetise or give value to outcomes.
- Need to know ecosystem service value or natural capital accounts.
- PES pilots, these need to be commissioned now to test models.
- Need to look at other opportunities for agricultural land such as horticulture and what that would mean.
- Fluctuations in land use and what this would mean economically.

Table 4 – Food and Farming

Opportunities:

- To communicate the importance of "green credentials" to sustainable land managers
- Effective use of land within its limits
- To assess the technical capability of grassland, soil wealth, nutrient management, genetics, trees, hedges.

Working together:

- Sustainable agricultural management needs to look at a joined up process of human capital, social capital, environmental capital and infrastructure

What evidence is needed:

- Review of current work on livestock/environment and understanding the results when that data is available.
- More impact assessments e.g. economic, environmental, social, cultural in the long and short term.
- Better understand the reasons for land abandonment.
- The impact of the Wales approach on domestic trade
- Case studies on diversification.
- Scenarios report to show impacts on extremes on agriculture/environment.
- Map work report from Sustainable Management for Natural resources

Next Steps

It was agreed that possible areas for future discussion could include PES, National Natural Resources Policy, legislation requirements, discussion on the work of the Scenario Working Group.

The group asked for further discussion on what the vision of the Group is and this will make it easier to plan how we get there.

WG official 1 closed the workshop by thanking all for attending on what would be his last meeting of the Group before leaving to take a post in the Environment Agency. WG official 2 will replace him as interim Chair.