



Natural Resources Conference: Summary Report

Making the best of Wales' natural resources in the 21st Century

25 November 2013

Introduction

The Minister for Natural Resources & Food hosted a conference at the Swalec Stadium, Cardiff, "*Making the best of Wales' natural resources in the 21st Century*". The conference focused in the main on the delivery of the Welsh Government's natural resource management objectives, including the Environment Bill White Paper proposals, within the context of wider policy delivery across the Department for Natural Resources & Food.

Around 160 stakeholders attended the conference from a variety of sectors including agriculture, environment, energy, business, water industry, land management and recreation.

A full transcript of all the comments and views of stakeholders captured through the *MeetingSphere* technology is available. The report below contains a précis of key themes, comments and questions captured through the day.

Morning session 1 – presentations

Speakers in this session included:

- Rt Hon Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales
- Alun Davies AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food
- Alan Seatter, Deputy Director-General Environment, European Commission
- Dr Emyr Roberts, Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales

There was also a Q&A panel discussion involving:

- Alun Davies AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food
- Dr Emyr Roberts, Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales
- Professor Peter Matthews, Chair, Natural Resources Wales
- Matthew Quinn, Director – Environment, Welsh Government
- Alan Seatter, Deputy Director-General Environment, European Commission

A range of comments were captured, which focused mainly around:

- The links between the Environment, Future Generations and Planning Bills.
- The area-based approach and Natural Resource Management Plans.
- The consultation on the Environment Bill White Paper and the engagement process around it.
- The ecosystem approach and ecosystem services.

- Issues around the economy and funding.
- The role of Natural Resources Wales.
- The need for education early on.
- Issues around sustainability.
- The importance of building on existing mechanisms.
- Specific issues around climate change, forestry, water, marine, biodiversity and landscapes.

Morning session 2 – presentations

Presentations in this session came from:

- Lee Truelove, Head of Communications, First Milk
- Rhodri Lloyd-Williams and Alun Lloyd Davies - Cambrian Mountains Initiative

There were a number of comments and questions on both presentations, which are set out in the transcript of comments.

Environment Bill White Paper– key themes and questions

Dr Andy Fraser, Natural Resource Programme in the Welsh Government, introduced the White Paper.

There was then an opportunity for roundtable discussions on the White Paper, focusing on the proposals relating to the area-based approach for natural resource management.

Areas of general consensus in relation to the proposals for an Environment Bill included:

- Support for general direction of overall package of proposals in relation to an area-based approach to integrated natural resource management.
- Recognition of the need to capture differing views and understanding of an ‘area-based approach’ and the need for practical illustration.
- Recognition of the critical links to the wider legislative programme, and in particular to the Future Generations Bill and Planning (Wales) Bill.
- Recognition of the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders and policy areas, and using existing partnership and communications mechanisms in co-ordinating and gathering evidence for the area-based approach.
- Recognition of the need to engage and understand impacts of proposals on industry, businesses and land owners. For example, to engage private sector representatives in development of proposals around ecosystem services.

Comments received during the Environment Bill White Paper workshop session are included in the transcript of comments captured by MeetingSphere and will form part of the White Paper consultation.

Afternoon workshops on Welsh Government policy initiatives

The afternoon session provided an opportunity for attendees to attend two different policy workshops on current or emerging strategies, initiatives and policies.

The workshops were:

- Integrating natural resource management

- Water Strategy for Wales
- Climate action and resilience policy
- Sustainable food: prioritising our action
- Future Generations Report: stimulating the national conversation
- Developing agri-environment schemes fit for the future
- Potential Payment for Ecosystem Services market mechanisms in Wales
- Segregation and recycling of waste in Wales
- Opportunities and benefits of renewable energy projects
- Nature Recovery Plan: time for action
- Woodlands in Wales
- Outdoor Recreation

Detailed feedback was captured by each of the workshop leads for them to consider in taking forward these policy areas. Comments received during the wash-up session after the workshops are included in the transcript of comments captured by MeetingSphere.