

Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 25 September 2017

Future Landscapes Wales: Governance Principles and Update from Implementation Group Report

1 Introduction

The 'Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales' report (May 2017) follows a review of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks (The 'Marsden Review'). The report advocates a change in management approach that would see these landscapes become the drivers of the sustainable management of natural resources.

1.1 Current management and purpose of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

National Parks have two statutory purposes:

To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas; and

To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas to the public.

Where conflict arises between these two statutory purposes the National Park Authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area under the 'Sandford Principle'.

AONBs are areas designated for the purpose of conserving and enhancing their natural beauty and differ from National Parks in that they lack the statutory purpose to promote opportunities for the public to enjoy and understand the area.

1.2 The Marsden Review

In light of the age of the legislation setting out the statutory purposes of the two designations (almost 70 years old), in 2014 the Welsh Government commissioned a group of experts, led by Professor Terry Marsden, to undertake a Review of Designated Landscapes. Published in 2015, the 'Marsden Review' provided 69 recommendations.

1.3 The Future Landscapes Working Group

Following the review, in the autumn of 2015, the then Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant advised for a Future Landscapes Working Group to be set up. Led by Dafydd Elis-Thomas, the Working Group involved representatives of the National Parks, AONBs, environmental groups, business and government officials, who explored the Marsden Review recommendations. This also allowed consideration of the recommendations in the context of new legislation; the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the evidence provided in the inaugural State of Natural Resources Report. The Working

Group published its report Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales (the 'Future Landscapes Review') in May.

2 The Future Landscapes Review – a report by the Future Landscapes Working Group

2.1 Proposition

The report sets out a new Proposition for Designated Landscapes to go beyond their current purposes relating to conservation and amenity value. It states that Designated Landscapes should be the drivers of the sustainable management of natural resources providing wider public and private benefit. It emphasises the opportunity, through partnership working, to realise the economic potential of communities and promote green growth and the resilience of ecosystems through these landscapes.

2.2 Governance

A new way of working through governance arrangements that include a wide range of delivery and partnership models with a common vision is proposed. It also recommends that bodies and partnerships with responsibility for the Designated Landscapes should work across boundaries with Natural Resources Wales and local partnerships to promote their social, cultural and economic value and sustainable use. The report states that partnerships would be required to attract new resourcing and influence investments by others. It stressed that this new way of working will require a behavioural and institutional change.

2.3 Action Plan

An 18 month action plan of first steps to realise the Proposition is contained in the report. It is divided into the following elements:

- collaboration and partnership;
- vision and direction;
- refreshing governance: improving performance and accountability;
- innovations in resourcing; and
- driving well-being and resilience.

3 Update

The Future Landscapes Review proposes a model for developing future public policies and drafting devolved legislation. It will be for the Welsh Government to look at whether legislation needs to be changed to support the recommendations of the report.

In this context, Welsh Government have released a consultation over the summer - 'Taking forward Wales' sustainable management of natural resources' seeking views on new regulatory approaches to the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales. Chapter 3 is seeking views on the proposals put forward by the Future Landscapes Review.

The National Association for AONBs is preparing a response to that element of the consultation on behalf of all the AONBs in Wales. Swansea Council is also preparing a response on elements of the consultation that effect its remit.

4 Future Landscapes – Review of Governance Principles

To provide a framework within which the governance arrangements for a designated landscape can be considered, Section 5 of the Report outlines an agreed set of good governance principles. A summary of the governance principles are provided in Appendix 1.

Designated landscapes around Wales are considering the adoption of these principles in their ways of working; both Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean AONB Joint Advisory Committee have both formally adopted them.

4.1 Recommendation

The Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group are asked to review principles of good governance set out in the report and are recommended to adopt them in their governance of the AONB.

The full Future Landscapes Wales report can be downloaded from the above link:
<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/review-designated-landscapes-wales/?lang=en>

Chris Lindley
Gower AONB Team Leader
15 September 2017

Appendix 1

Summary of Future Landscapes Governance Principles

Table 1: Summary of Principles of good Governance for designated landscapes

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legitimacy, participation and voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance in society • Representation and participation • Active dialogue and consensus • Subsidiarity |
| Developing and implementing a strategic vision for the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring and consistent vision • Consistent with national outcomes • Reflect obligations • Adaptive management and innovation |
| Effective performance management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management effectiveness • Learning culture, skills and knowledge • Advocacy and outreach • Acknowledging and addressing weakness or poor performance • Efficient use of financial resources |
| Accountability and transparency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity and commitment • Decision making and reporting • Allocation of resources • Communication |
| Fairness and rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical and fair decision making • Impartial and without discrimination • Respectful of language and culture • Respect rights • Active engagement |