

Ymgyrch Diogelu Cymru Wledig Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

Cadeirydd Chairman Dr Jean Rosenfeld
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Alun Ffred Jones AM,
Chairman,
Environment and Sustainability Committee,
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Cardiff Bay,
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August 24th 2015

Dear Alun Ffred

**Environment and Sustainability Committee: Environment Bill:
Supplementary evidence: Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)**

In response to your invitation at the Committee's oral evidence session in July, for further suggestions as to how both the scope and approaches proposed in draft Environment Bill may be strengthened, please find enclosed a short supplementary statement from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales.

I hope this explains why it is crucial that the role of landscapes and in particular those cultural and heritage values which define a location's sense of place, should be more appropriately reflected in the underlying principles that Part 1 of the Bill seeks to promote.

I trust this additional information proves helpful.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter A. Ogden
Director

Cc Mr Alun Davidson
Clerc
Environment and Sustainability Committee



Environment and Sustainability Committee

Environment Bill:

Supplementary evidence: Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

A place for landscapes in the Environment Bill.

Authoritative evidence presented to the Environment and Sustainability Committee during its initial consideration of the Environment Bill in July, highlighted the fact that the draft Bill did not recognise the cultural values associated with landscapes, or the important context and integrating role they play in land use management and environmental stewardship.

Why are landscapes so important?

Landscapes are different to ecosystems. They are the places where bundles of ecosystems exist and interact with each other to create the distinctive physical characteristics and identity of a location. Just as importantly they are the medium which expresses the cultural values and associations people have with nature and their surroundings.



The way these different relationships manifest themselves not only shapes the places where natural resources exist but also the way society perceive, value and respond to the landscapes that surround them.

Landscapes therefore define our “Sense of place” and in so doing must be regarded as fundamental considerations in the configuration of any operational approach which aims to secure both the integrated and sustainable management of our natural resources and ecosystems.

For any approach which directs the use of natural resources to be complete, it must therefore not only account for those cultural interactions which give landscapes their local value or national importance, but also ensure that these same values are fully considered in any process which guides or determines change to them.

For that to be the case, any important human / nature relationships which form an integral part of a landscape’s defining character as well the cultural traits which define a location’s symbolic, emotional and psychological values, must be reflected in the Bill’s Principles of Natural Resource Management.

At the moment, this doesn’t seem to be the case as the contextual role that landscapes play has been overlooked.

Similarly because the “Principles of Sustainable Natural Resources management” only apply to the scope of natural resources as defined in Clause 2 of the Bill, a credibility gap exists in

understanding how these Principles adequately account for all the defining elements of Article 5 of the European Landscape Convention, as outlined below.

European Landscape Convention: Article 5

Each Party undertakes:

- a. to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;*
- b. to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning through the adoption of the specific measures set out in Article 6;*
- c) to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.*

Given these requirements, it is therefore difficult to understand how landscapes or the elements within them which are valued specifically because of the significance of their cultural signature, are accounted for in the current SMNR approach¹.

Embedding landscapes into the existing SMNR's approach

Whilst the Bill's current SMNR approach aims to safeguard the resilience of natural resources and individual ecosystems, it is not apparent how it will secure the long term integrity or coherence of landscapes especially those distinguishing cultural qualities or associations which give a location its distinctive identity and sense of place.

Broadening the scope of the ecosystems approach to include specific reference to landscapes would in our view overcome this deficiency. In addition it would also add greater credibility to Welsh Government's overall natural resource management ambition, by securing not only the optimal state or composition of habitats, but by also embracing a culturally inclusive and more coherent "place based" approach, that landscapes describe.

CPRW therefore suggests that a landscape's context, in particular any distinctive cultural features, human influences or associations which add value to its character, should be properly accounted for in the Bill's Principles for the sustainable management of natural resources.

Peter Ogden
Director
CPRW

August 24th 2015

¹ Such qualities or cultural values of landscapes might include the distinctive patterns of field systems, the uniqueness of stone walls or hedgerow boundaries, landscapes with striking social values, e.g. the former coal or slate mining landscapes of South and North Wales, (examples of which are either inscribed or proposed as World Heritage Cultural landscapes because of their Outstanding Universal Cultural Values).

Appendix 1

The difference between ecosystems and landscapes

Although not defined in the Bill, ecosystems are accepted as being of any size, usually encompassing specific limited spaces and having vaguely defined boundaries. They are functional systems which focus on the interaction of organisms, populations, and energy/matter cycles. Humans and anthropogenic elements are effectively viewed as external factors.

By contrast, landscapes are areas of land or water or both, well defined in space and time along various scales, which provide the living space for the totality of biotic elements. Human activity and any associated cultures and values are fundamental components of a landscape and the way they interact provides both structure and the medium which enables ecosystems to be integrated in a socially and economically desirable manner.

Because landscapes are determined by the different clusters or patterns of interacting ecosystems within them, their properties and values are more complex than the component ecosystems which create them. Effectively landscapes are higher order, added value natural resource systems with a more understated range of broader characteristics than ecosystems.