

**REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION POLICY OFFICER**

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**SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENT (WALES) BILL CONSULTATION - WHITE PAPER**

Purpose of Report

1. This report draws Members' attention to the current consultation by Welsh Government on proposals for an Environment Bill: *Towards the Sustainable Management of Wales' Natural Resources*.

Background

2. Welsh Government is consulting on proposals for the Welsh legislative framework which it is intended will allow management of Wales' natural resources in an integrated way and in support of the Programme for Government. The consultation ends on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

3. Included in the proposals is an area-based approach to natural resource management. This is intended to complement existing and proposed sustainable development laws to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits for Wales.

4. Welsh Government consulted in 2012 on a Green Paper '*Sustaining a Living Wales*' (see *Background documents* below). The White Paper builds on the responses to the Green Paper to set out more fully the legislative proposals for natural resource management, specifically including the following themes and proposals:

- a.) Joining up the existing statutory frameworks for natural resource management in Wales. Proposals include:
  - A legal definition for 'natural resources'
  - A national Natural Resources policy
  - An area-based approach for natural resource management
  - A mechanism to report on the state of natural resources
- b.) Ensuring that Natural Resources Wales has the legislative tools to implement integrated natural resource management. Proposals include:
  - Payments for ecosystem services
  - Management agreements
  - An experimental power for Natural Resources Wales to test innovative approaches
- c.) Taking action to ensure that Wales' natural resources are used to best effect and that waste is reduced. Proposals include:
  - driving investment towards the most sustainable waste management solutions for Wales
- d.) Simplifying and clarifying the law for a number of existing environmental regulatory regimes in relation to:
  - Marine licensing management
  - Shellfisheries management
  - Flood and water management

- Land drainage management

#### Responding to the consultation

5. Welsh Government has provided a consultation questionnaire on its website. It is proposed that the national park authorities in Wales submit a combined National Park Wales response to the White Paper, with officers' comments being collated and combined by the National Parks Wales Policy Officer, Mr Greg Pycroft. Members are invited to contribute comments; please forward any comments to Mr Pycroft by the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 (contact details below).

#### Financial considerations

6. None known at this time.

#### Risk considerations and compliance issues

7. None known at this time.

#### Human Rights/Equality issues

8. None known at this time.

#### Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

9. An intention of the legislation is to ensure better management of natural resources, which implies more effective management for biodiversity.

#### Welsh Language statement

10. Not applicable.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Members AUTHORISE the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, to agree the National Parks Wales response to the White Paper.**

#### Background Documents and information

- Welsh Government (October 2013), Consultation on the White Paper *Towards the Sustainable Management of Wales' Natural Resources. Consultation on proposals for an Environment Bill*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/environment-bill-white-paper/?lang=en>
- Current contact details for Mr Greg Pycroft:  
[greg.pycroft@nationalparkswales.gov.uk](mailto:greg.pycroft@nationalparkswales.gov.uk)
- Welsh Government (January 2012), *Sustaining a Living Wales. A green paper on a new approach to natural resource management in Wales*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/sustainingwales/?lang=en>
- NPA Report No. 13/12 (28<sup>th</sup> March 2012) *Sustaining a Living Wales – Green Paper Response*  
[http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/files/Committee/NPA/2012/28\\_03\\_12/13\\_12%20Sustaining%20a%20Living%20Wales%20-%20Green%20Paper%20Response.pdf](http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/files/Committee/NPA/2012/28_03_12/13_12%20Sustaining%20a%20Living%20Wales%20-%20Green%20Paper%20Response.pdf)

*(For further information please contact Michel Regelous, Conservation Policy Officer)*