

CONSULTATION QUESTION SECTION

ABOUT YOU SECTION

Your name: **Jonathon Colchester (Branch Chairman)**

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Please indicate whether you are responding as:

(Please tick)

- a. An individual
- b. On behalf of an organisation**

Please indicate which of these best represent you or your organisation

[Please tick all that apply]

- a. Farming
- b. Forestry
- c. Environmental interests
- d. Tourism/hospitality
- e. Food and timber supply chains
- f. Public sector
- g. Private sector
- h. Third sector**
- i. Trade Union/Representative
- j. Other, please specify below

CPRW is Wales' foremost countryside protection charity, founded in 1928. It aims to increase public awareness of the importance of landscapes and seascapes. It promotes their responsible care and use. It defends the qualities that make rural Wales special. It seeks to influence decision makers to guide responsible change and oppose them when they don't. It promotes landscapes as inspiring places for learning, personal development and well-being and it celebrates Wales' heritage of landscapes, culture and rural life.

CPRW Brecon & Radnor welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation which is so important to the future of Welsh farming and rural life, to Welsh landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity, and has profound implications for our charitable purposes.

Question 1 of 20

From Chapter 4: Land Management Programme

We propose a new Land Management Programme consisting of an Economic Resilience scheme and a Public Goods scheme. Do you agree these schemes are the best way to deliver against the principles?

1. Yes
2. No
3. **Unsure**

If NO, what alternatives would be best?

CAP subsidy mechanisms have failed to deliver for either Welsh farmers or the health of the Welsh environment and we welcome the broad aims of the consultation proposals i.e. to replace CAP support with schemes which seek 1) to ensure farm viability and 2) to restore damaged ecosystems and reverse drastic declines in biodiversity.

These goals are consistent with the Welsh Government's recent legislation, not least the commitments to sustainable management of natural resources and to the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystems, as set out in Environment (Wales) Act (EWA). The Public Goods Scheme (PGS) has the potential to be an essential instrument in the achievement of resilient ecosystems.

Achievement of both objectives could not be more important and urgent. The proposals come at a time when many small farms are struggling, and the production of high quality, high welfare, high nutrient value food with good environmental outcomes, faces fierce competition from intensive farming systems which, by virtue of scale and the nature of inputs and waste products, can pose significant health, welfare and environmental problems. At the same time the State of Nature Report 2016 shows huge, potentially irrecoverable, declines in biodiversity, Wales ranks 49th lowest out of the 218 countries within the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII)¹, and NRW's State of Natural Resources Report concludes that the resilience of Welsh ecosystems is still declining and that *'this will impact on their capacity to provide services and benefits into the future'*².

While we support the aims of the proposals we have serious concerns, not least how the successful integration of the two schemes is to be managed, which are set out in our answers below.

Of particular concern, it is very disappointing that the Minister, Lesley Griffiths, has announced abolition of the Basic Payment Scheme in advance of the conclusion of this consultation and before hearing the evidence from industry and other bodies.

Upland farmers face additional challenges which have long been recognised. Till quite recently Welsh farms in Less Favoured Areas (80% of Welsh land³) received specific additional support. The Scottish Government maintains LFA support payments, but in Wales hill farming has become financially precarious and farming incomes highly dependent on Basic Payments.

Farming has shaped the landscapes and social communities of Welsh uplands, maintained heritage and protected nature sites, and ensured the delivery of 'ecosystems services'. Farmers need not

¹ State of Nature Report 2016

² State of Natural Resources Report Chap. 8

³ Research Briefing The Farming Sector in Wales <http://www.assembly.wales/research%20documents/16-053-farming-sector-in-wales/16-053-web-english2.pdf>

only to remain on the land (Principle 1) but to be supported appropriately to continue traditional 'high nature value' upland farming practices. No financial modelling or analysis accompanies this consultation and the case has not been made that the proposals will be sufficient to ensure that traditional upland farming will be financially viable in the absence of direct payments.

The social, cultural and landscape character of rural Wales is dependent on a thriving farming sector and CPRW Brecon & Radnor appeals to the Welsh government to give full consideration to consultation evidence on the need for direct payments and/or extended transitional arrangements. If the proposed schemes are implemented, a careful and gradual transition is essential if the proposals are to win the backing of farmers, and to ensure that farming livelihoods are maintained during the necessary period of adaptation and farmers are retained on the land.

Question 2 of 20

From Chapter 4: Land Management Programme

Does the Welsh Government need to take action to ensure tenants can access new schemes?

1. **Yes**
2. No
3. Unsure

If YES, what action would be best?

All farmers and land managers are intended to have access to both proposed schemes but there are clear practical problems for tenant farmers, for example:

- Tenancies may specify what activities tenanted land can be used for and limit environmental or diversification options
- Long term projects/investment may not be feasible for a tenant on a short term tenancy
- It's not clear how long term projects and interruptions in a tenancy (for any reason) will be managed
- It's not clear in the case of public goods whether the land owner or the land manager (if different) will be eligible for payment

It's also not clear that these issues are capable of resolution before the proposed introduction of the new schemes. They may require revisions of legal and regulatory control of tenancy contracts. Meanwhile, we need future farmers, and tenant farmers who are entering the system must be encouraged as much as possible.

Clarity is also required in the case of common land where there may be multiple farmers/land managers with rights over the land and whose activities are contributing to its management. At the same time the landowner may also be involved in land management projects.

Question 3 of 20

From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience

From your experience of current programmes, what do you feel would work well for the future?

Please see Qu 1 and comments regarding viability of upland farms.

The National Assembly's 'Research Briefing: The Farming Sector in Wales'⁴ identifies key characteristics of Welsh farming which must be fully recognised in any discussion of 'productivity' and profitability, such as relatively high percentage (within the UK nations) employed within agriculture in Wales, high proportion of LFA land and permanent grassland, and high proportion of very small farms which, by definition, cannot achieve economies of scale. Discussions of productivity must take account of the Welsh context, and specifically the vital importance of the small family farm and of Wales' reputation for high quality non-intensive food production. We fear the prospect of more traditional small hill farmers going out of business and land being bought up by large land management concerns from beyond Wales.

It is essential that the two schemes are complementary and that funds are not paid out of the Economic Resilience scheme (ERS) towards activities which will have harmful impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems. The successful integration of the two schemes is fundamental but not properly explored within the consultation.

In the long-term, farming economic resilience is wholly dependent on the health of ecosystems. We are concerned that the PGS may be regarded as the poor relation of the ERS rather than the crucial pathway to implementing the Environment Wales Act and achieving enhanced resilience of ecosystems.

Para 5.16 states that land managers will be expected to demonstrate potential for improvement in economic and environmental resilience as a consequence of improved economic resilience. This is laudable but it is difficult to see how it could be assessed in practice for those farms who opt, if this is possible, entirely for Economic Resilience funding.

INTENSIVE POULTRY INDUSTRY IN POWYS

We are concerned that payments under Area 2 'Improving Productivity' may (as RDP funds, from several grant schemes, have been) be directed towards intensive farming practices which can result in substantial environmental damage.

CPRW Brecon & Radnor Branch has submitted evidence to the Welsh Government Petitions Committee regarding the rapid expansion of the intensive poultry industry in Powys and associated environmental impacts. Natural Resources Wales state in their response of 17th August 2018:

"Natural Resources Wales (NRW) agrees that the intensification of agriculture along with some farming practice can result in environmental degradation of biodiversity, soil, air and water quality. ...Evidence shows that atmospheric releases of ammonia is having an impact on a number of protected sites in Wales. In addition, wastes arising from livestock also pose a significant risk to water quality in Wales. ...The development of a strategic approach, with guidance from WG could further help protect human health and the natural environment. NRW would be willing to support WG in producing such guidance to help the industry develop in a sustainable fashion to support agricultural development post Brexit."

⁴ Research Briefing The Farming Sector in Wales <http://www.assembly.wales/research%20documents/16-053-farming-sector-in-wales/16-053-web-english2.pdf>

NRW also confirm that the current impacts of the industry on the environment in Wales have not been quantified.

To avoid conflict between the objectives of the two schemes it is essential that the principles of sustainable management of natural resources (EWA) are key criteria in the identification of investment opportunities which may be eligible for support from the ERS.

Where the Principles of sustainable management of natural resources are:

“In this Part, the “principles of sustainable management of natural resources” are—

- (a) manage adaptively, by planning, monitoring, reviewing and, where appropriate, changing action;*
- (b) consider the appropriate spatial scale for action;*
- (c) promote and engage in collaboration and co-operation;*
- (d) make appropriate arrangements for public participation in decision-making;*
- (e) take account of all relevant evidence and gather evidence in respect of uncertainties;*
- (f) take account of the benefits and intrinsic value of natural resources and ecosystems;*
- (g) take account of the short, medium and long term consequences of actions;*
- (h) take action to prevent significant damage to ecosystems;*
- (i) take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects—*
 - (i) diversity between and within ecosystems;*
 - (ii) the connections between and within ecosystems;*
 - (iii) the scale of ecosystems;*
 - (iv) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);*
 - (v) the adaptability of ecosystems”⁵*

These criteria must be understood to be at the heart of what is meant by ‘sustainable’ in the context of any land activity or development.

LARGE SCALE RENEWABLE ENERGY

We are very disturbed that the Welsh Government seems to consider large scale renewable energy schemes as an appropriate farm diversification (Area 3) and trust Para. 5.35 is intended to read ‘...**small** scale renewable energy’. Farm scale renewable energy schemes capable of reducing farm costs, not requiring export infrastructure, may be entirely appropriate and low in impact on neighbours and the wider environment and landscape. Powys already contains two and a bit SSAs designated for the development of wind power projects, and twenty LSAs for solar power projects. Evidence prepared for the recent Powys LDP established that there are no further sites suitable for large scale wind. Evidence was also presented to the LDP Inquiry regarding substantial harms being experienced by some residents in the vicinity of wind farms. Powys residents have a right to expect that renewable energy development of any scale will be confined to the designated areas. The burden on Powys landscapes and residents is already heavy. This is a county heavily dependent on a thriving tourist economy, in turn reliant on the outstanding quality of Powys landscapes.

It is concerning that the Welsh Government has promoted as farm diversifications two forms of development which have divided communities and have sometimes set farming interests against other residents. Clearly, when public funds are used to support an investment which offers a (potentially much needed) income stream to one member of a community but significantly

⁵ S4 Environment Act (Wales) 2016

disbenefits numbers of others, this may pull rural communities apart, and, tragically, this has been the experience over some years now in parts of Powys.

By contrast, UK Government advice⁶ lists the following potential diversifications out of agriculture:

- “•tourist accommodation - eg bed and breakfast
- retail outlets and catering - eg a farm shop and tea rooms
- rural tourism - eg farm attractions
- converting redundant buildings to other uses - eg offices
- making and selling non-agricultural products - eg cakes and beer
- training and promotion of rural crafts and arts - eg dry stone walling workshops
- adding value - eg smoked-food products, cheese and ice-cream
- energy markets - eg woodfuel projects”

These types of diversification, at appropriate scale, in appropriate locations, have the potential to offer benefits to the wider community and the rural economy as a whole.

Please also see, in relation to this chapter, Question 7 and our reservation about WG/NRW's capacity to provide the expert advice which successful operation of these schemes will require.

Question 4 of 20

From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience

Do you agree with the focus of the Economic Resilience scheme being on growing the market opportunities for products from the land throughout the supply chain, rather than restricting support to land management businesses only?

There is an opportunity here for the creation and expansion of additional local markets, through the promotion of local food hubs and direct off-farm sales, procurement by public bodies of quality Welsh produce etc. Public sector procurement could mitigate the inevitable post Brexit volatility of markets for Welsh farm produce. These measures could have additional benefits to health, for example by improvement of school and hospital meals, could go some way to correcting (locally) some of the injustices and poor outcomes of the current global food system, and enhance Wales' tourist offer.

Question 5 of 20

From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience

Are the five proposed areas of support the right ones to improve economic resilience?

1. Yes
2. No
3. **Unsure**

Are there any areas which should be included but currently are not?

Broadly speaking we are in agreement with these areas with the cautions expressed in Qu 6 below.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/diversifying-farming-businesses>

Question 6 of 20

From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience

Of the five proposed areas for support, which are the priorities, both in terms of funding, and the sequence of delivery? For example, are certain measures needed in advance of others?

Government proposals will require substantial changes in working practices and focus for many farmers and land managers, if the PGS is to succeed in delivering biodiversity and ecosystems gains. It is essential to us all in Wales that this scheme does succeed. Area 5 and in particular the provision of on farm advice and guidance in the achievement of public goods outcomes will be essential to the scheme's take-up and success. This has to be a priority area of spending.

Equally, Welsh Government investment in the understanding of risks and threats to delivery of public goods (Area 4) is critical. For example, there has been little scientific investigation to date into the impacts on woodlands, soil, air and water ecosystems, of increases in ammonia emissions and potential remedial actions. Equally pressing is investment in development of local strategies to address the losses through disease which are now occurring in our woodlands and trees on farms and minimise future risk.

Powys is a county dominated by hill farms and sheep. Brexit poses a particular risk to the availability of markets for sheep and lamb and development of new markets (Area 1) within and outside Wales should be another area of priority spending. We note that any arrangement other than a FTA with the EU, which currently seems out of the question, will be disastrous for upland sheep farmers unless special provision is made for their future.

Question 7 of 20

From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience

Should we be investing in people, for example to bring in new ideas, skills and people into land management and the supply chain in Wales?

1. **Yes**
2. No
3. Unsure

If YES, how should we look to do this?

Yes. There is both scope and need for new ideas and fresh thinking to enhance the Welsh brand, introduce and exploit innovation in farming practices, in markets and supply chains, encourage young farmers and land managers into the industry, provide on farm advice and training in nature friendly and regenerative farming practices including expansion of schemes such as Farming Connect, research into environmental baselines and identification of public goods, farmer led research projects, mentoring schemes and skills sharing... We must have farming in Wales which helps to restore biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems and this will require new approaches both in the industry and in policy and regulation.

Funding might also include investment in the coming generation of innovative young farmers through establishment of a GCSE in agriculture, school visits to farms and other educational initiatives in land stewardship, food production and appreciation, relationship of diet and health.

Also important to the success of the schemes is continued government support (from funds outside these schemes) of those organisations, principally NGOs, which are also helping to deliver environmental gains in Wales. This will include both landowning bodies, including wildlife trusts, and advisory bodies such as Pont Cymru.

The consultation repeatedly emphasises the availability of WG/NRW advice but this will require a huge increase in human resources. NRW is already claiming that it is under-resourced and unable to undertake research. We cannot envisage current NRW or WG staff being able to take on more without substantial additional support. The advisers need to command the respect of experienced and understandably anxious farmers. We anticipate that finding suitably experienced and knowledgeable, qualified people of sufficient calibre will be difficult especially when the rest of the UK experiences similar problems and needs. This bottleneck in rolling out any new payment system must be taken into account.

Chapter 5 does not give any details about payment structure and how absorption of too great a portion of available funds by the delivery process will be avoided.

Question 8 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

We have set out our proposed parameters for the public goods scheme. Are they appropriate?

1. **Yes**
2. No
3. Unsure

Would you change anything?

4. **Yes**
1. No
2. Unsure

If YES, what?

The document says payment will be for outcomes commensurate with “*the value society places on them*” and measurement may be by proxy-outcomes. In this case there needs to be a sound evidence base that the proxy-outcomes do correctly represent the valued outcomes. The relationship between restoration and management of habitats to biodiversity and the critical importance of healthy ecosystems (including fungi, plant and insect life) to the future of agriculture is not spelled out.

Paras 4.15 and 6.9 suggest a payment scheme based on factors other than input costs. Clearly input costs must be fully rewarded, as must income forgone, if the PGS is to be attractive. Equally, timing of payments needs to reflect business cash flow needs, and claw back on discontinuance of a long term project must not create a financial disincentive for entry into the PGS. Rewards which don't correspond to input costs risk inflating the value of agricultural land by virtue of potential subsidy available and inviting inward investment from financial enterprises with no interest in food production or the maintenance of Welsh rural culture.

Also, any wide divergence for different public goods in the costs/income foregone v subsidy ratio will prejudice the delivery of the wide range of public goods Welsh biodiversity needs and divert

efforts towards only the most profitable.

We would like to see within **Parameter 1**:

1. **Soil conservation**: this public good category needs to be expanded to include maintenance and enhancement of soil health.

The Climate Change Committee advises that soil health is essential not only for the productive capacity of agricultural land, and for societal benefits in the form of carbon sequestration, water retention and quality, but that soils are also fundamental to climate change mitigation and adaptation⁷.

The Sustainable Soils Alliance advises that in the UK soil health is “*declining to the extent that we are now just one generation away from a soil system that is unable to meet the needs of the people that depend upon it*”⁸.

Soil health is also critical to ecosystems and biodiversity. See, for example, Plantlife report⁹ on excess nitrogen impacts on plant diversity, which will in turn impact habitats and food sources.

At a time when trees face a barrage of extremely serious pests and diseases and ash look likely to disappear from our Welsh landscapes, soil health and the resilience of the fungal networks within the soil which support and nourish trees is critical.

Soil health and increasing the carbon content of soils also has a role to play in reducing flood risk.

2. **Air quality**: We welcome recognition of agricultural air pollution as an issue to be tackled. Action on this is essential for enhancement of ecosystems and biodiversity recovery – see recent Plantlife report on ammonia/nitrogen emissions in Wales and plant diversity and habitats¹⁰. The regulatory framework must require minimum standards re pollutant emissions, such that the scheme rewards only additionality (in accordance with parameter 5).

There are existing intensive livestock developments which are, individually and/or cumulatively, significant contributors to rural air pollution and Government must also take on board the requirement for retrofitting polluting developments with ammonia reducing technologies and appropriate funding/cofunding.

Agricultural air pollution is also a very significant contributor to rural and urban air pollution¹¹.

3. **Heritage and recreation**: We’d like to see activities which promote better understanding of the environment included within this category. Also measures which protect or enhance the quality of landscapes, including restoration of stone walls, hedge laying, planting of new hedgerows and maintenance of existing hedges, planting for screening, though activities rewarded must not be those already required by conditions attached to planning permissions.

Parameter 2: This is essential but there will need to be clarification of application to those who

⁷ Environmental Audit Committee – Inquiry into Soil Health <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CCC-Written-Submission-to-Environmental-Audit-Committee-Inquiry-into-Soil-Health.pdf>

⁸ <https://sustainablesoils.org/about-soils/>

⁹ <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/our-work/publications/we-need-to-talk-about-nitrogen-welsh-report>

¹⁰ <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/our-work/publications/we-need-to-talk-about-nitrogen-welsh-report>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/17/farming-is-single-biggest-cause-of-worst-air-pollution-in-europe>

manage or part manage land without ownership, such as tenants and commoners.

Parameter 3: Opportunities for action. The proposed public goods approach is entirely new and many schemes, particularly collaborative schemes at scale, will require onsite investigations, technical advice and careful design. Some (site-specific) ‘existing options’, which the consultation document suggests ‘*must be taken up*’ are probably, at any early stage of the scheme at least, too little understood for this to be a realistic requirement. A PGS is most likely to deliver ecosystems and biodiversity gains where farmers and land managers understand the required outcomes and are permitted to investigate and design the projects which they will run to deliver those outcomes, ensuring that public goods projects are a fit with other farm/land management activities and attractive to farmers and land managers.

Parameter 4: Evidence-based public goods. This will require investigation and research into existing baseline conditions such that gains can be identified, and appropriate targets set. We agree independent third party assessment and monitoring will be necessary.

Parameter 5: Agreed, with the proviso that additionality is identified as over and above a new or existing regulatory floor, or other legal requirements such as those imposed by planning conditions. This must not be used to reward minimal effort from current poor performers or penalize high performing farmers or land managers.

The criteria “continuing appropriate management activity” we understand to mean that funds will be available under the PGS to those maintaining previous land management practices which are already delivering public goods.

Parameter 6: Agreed, though advice must include site-specific advice and acknowledge that the successful operation of a PGS will necessarily be something of a learning process for all.

We believe there is still a great deal of uncertainty over the purpose, scope and public participation in the development of Area Statements (Topic group at 2016 Wales Biodiversity partnership Conference) and we are not yet convinced they will be an appropriate tool for spatial targeting.

We are puzzled by the statement 6.19 proposing that “*existing options must be taken up while potential options may be included at the land manager’s discretion*” and once again think that farmers and the wider public will need a better description of how ERS and PGS will work together as potential income support streams for any particular type of farm. It is unclear whether the revised payment system allows an economically resilient large-scale farm to claim ERS income and opt to ignore “public goods”?

Question 9 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

This scheme is meant to offer land managers the opportunity to access a significant new income stream as the BPS comes to an end. How could we improve what is being proposed to attract land managers whilst still achieving our vision and objectives?

Criticisms frequently made of Glastir have been of its top down, prescriptive nature and heavy administrative demands.

It’s essential that farmers and land managers, with their close knowledge of the land and experience, are partners in the design of the public goods measures appropriate and feasible for the land they

manage. Payment scales need to recognise additional challenges in achieving outcomes where these exist, such as potentially in upland Wales. Potential participants must not be denied access to the PGS as a result of additional cost in implementing required measures.

Also essential is clarity over payments available, application methods, access to advice including onfarm, site-specific advice, preferably from officers who have the chance to get to know their particular area and develop a relationship of trust with scheme applicants.

Welsh Government must commit to long term support and long term contracts such that farmers/land managers are enabled to plan for the future and not subject to changing political whim.

Welsh Government should consider capping payments to the largest landowners to avoid some of the worst inequities of the CAP land-based payments and at the same time discourage inward investment by, for example, pension funds, in Welsh farmland for its subsidy potential.

We agree (6.19) that, since the emphasis is on public goods, third party environmental experts should be integrated into work on outcome assessments. We note that Chapter 7 (which has no corresponding question) 7.20 lists potential stakeholders and says the Wales Land Management Forum Subgroup is a “promising start”. However this group has no independent members from environmental groups or from scientific or agricultural educational and research establishments – see NRW website¹².

Question 10 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

Are there any other Public Goods which you think should be supported?

1. **Yes**
2. No
3. Unsure

If YES, why?

We would like to see within Parameter 1:

1. Health and welfare of livestock: There is public anxiety about a potential race to the bottom post-Brexit if trade deals allow cheap and low welfare animal products to undercut our own farmed produce. In addition, the inclusion of animal health and welfare within the English public goods scheme but exclusion from the Welsh may create an economic disadvantage for Welsh farmers. There is also a clear public good in reducing onfarm antibiotic use as far and fast as possible and moving away from the intensive rearing systems which are the most prolific antibiotic users.

The consultation document makes frequent reference to health and welfare issues but does not identify a public good which would support farmers in achieving highest health and welfare standards in animal management.

2. Reduction of chemical use: It is increasingly clear that some agricultural chemicals are not only

¹² <http://www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/farming/the-wales-land-management-forum-sub-group-on-agricultural-pollution/?lang=en>

impacting biodiversity and ecosystems, for example neonicotinoid impacts on pollinators, but also having unforeseen consequences for human health: by way of example - glyphosate herbicide has been implicated in incidence of cancer¹³, and studies have shown biocides to influence antibiotic resistance¹⁴. Farming and land management systems which eliminate, or substantially reduce, use of agricultural chemicals deliver a clear public benefit and that public good should be recognized.

Divergence from EU standards in animal welfare, chemical use on farms or GM technologies will impact on access to EU markets for Welsh produce.

3. **Woodlands:** Reference is made to tree planting under the heading 'Resilient habitats and ecosystems'. This should be tied into the Welsh Government's 'Woodlands for Wales'¹⁵, and should explicitly recognise the value of broadleaf woodland planting, and the restoration of Planted Ancient Woodland Sites.

We note that the UK Agriculture Bill gives the Welsh Ministers powers to give financial assistance for the purpose of 'protecting or improving the health of plants' and would like to see this reflected in proposed public goods.

We would like to see "high nature value" farming which cannot achieve Economic Resilience to be rewarded under PGS but the consultation is not clear how this would be administered. Inclusion of the above public goods might provide a route.

Question 11 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

A number of public goods could potentially take several years, sometimes decades, to be fully realised. E.g. carbon sequestration through broad leaf trees. To deliver on these, land managers may need to enter into a long term contract. How do you see such agreements working? What do you see as the benefits or disadvantages to such agreements?

We agree there will be a need for contracts of different lengths according to schemes proposed and delays in achievement of outcomes. Access to longer term schemes for farmers and land managers who are not the landowner must be facilitated if the PGS is to succeed across Wales. Benchmarks for assessing progress of long-term contracts will need to be developed.

See also our answer to Question 2

Question 12 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

A collaborative approach to delivering public goods may in some instances provide better value for money than isolated activity. How could the scheme facilitate this approach? How could public and private bodies contribute to such partnerships?

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/oct/22/monsanto-cancer-roundup-weedkiller-judge-denies-appeal>

¹⁴ <https://mbio.asm.org/content/6/2/e00009-15>

¹⁵ <https://beta.gov.wales/woodlands-wales-strategy>

There will be much to be learnt from existing collaborative and/or large scale schemes such as the Pumlumon Project, Pontbren, and from the Wildlife Trusts Living Landscapes projects.

Question 13 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

Some actions can deliver multiple public goods in the same location. For example, peat bog restoration can have benefits for carbon sequestration and flood risk reduction. However, some locations could be suitable for multiple public goods from different activities. For example, one location may be suitable to either plant trees for carbon sequestration, or to revert to wetland for biodiversity. How could locations for single, multiple or competing benefits be prioritised?

It is important that prioritisation does not create barriers to access for farmers and land managers outside priority areas or where outcomes may be more difficult to deliver. Government is proposing to remove an existing income stream and replace it with the PGS. It is vital that the scheme is fully accessible to all farmers and land managers from the outset, with a level playing field of advice, support and payment. As such we cannot see how strict prioritisation on basis of habitat type or location is either fair or desirable.

If multiple public goods are possible on one site, the decision regarding prioritisation has to be made by the land manager in response to specific local conditions. No one-size-fits-all priority ranking is appropriate or will deliver maximum environmental gains.

Rural Wales needs rich and diverse biodiversity and ecosystems appropriate to particular local topography and conditions.

Question 14 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

Given that support for the delivery of public goods will be a new approach in Wales, there will be a requirement for a significant amount of training and advice for the sector. How best could this training and advice be delivered? Which areas of the sector need the most attention?

The PGS must deliver both for farmers and land managers **and** for ecosystems, biodiversity and the people of Wales. Ecosystems services are threatened by the poor, and declining state of the Welsh environment and biodiversity – this affects us all. For some farmers and land managers successful implementation of the scheme will be a major change from current practices. Therefore there must be a substantial investment in education and upskilling.

Wales is fortunate in having many passionate environmental experts, within the farming and land management sector, working for environmental NGOs and in NRW. It would be a missed opportunity not to take advantage of all available expertise.

However, this training and upskilling will be a requirement not only within the sector but also for all who make decisions which can impact adversely on our ecosystems and biodiversity and so may jeopardise the work on which farmers and land managers will be embarking. This includes NRW and local authority planning officers. CPRW Brecon & Radnor Branch is very concerned that the local authority does not have required skills or resources to fulfil the s6 ecosystems duty, the

planning function does not have access to adequate expert advice and poorly understands its legal responsibilities with regard to environmental protection. Funding for the required training should not come out of agricultural scheme funds, but must be found if this weakness is not to undermine the potential of the PGS.

Question 15 of 20

From Chapter 6: Public Goods

Private investment in the purchase of public goods is already happening, but at a relatively small scale. How could the new scheme promote greater involvement from the private sector? What are the barriers to this type of investment?

Private investment in public goods is outside the scope of the public fund schemes under consideration. On no account must private investment existing outside the PGS become a pretext for the reduction of public funding of the PGS.

Question 16 of 20

From Chapter 8: Transition, delivery and legislation

What are your comments on the phased transition period and our ambition to complete the changes by 2025?

We trust that government will listen to and be guided by the evidence from industry and environmental bodies on the potential hardships which may be faced by farmers and land managers, and on the practical difficulties in establishing a PGS which will deliver its objectives and provide a realistic income stream open to all.

It is absolutely in the wider public interest that farmers and land managers are not financially disadvantaged, and that environmental gains are achieved hand in hand with greater financial stability for farmers and land managers.

Please see our comments on the Basic Payment Scheme in Qu1 above.

Question 17 of 20

From Chapter 8: Transition, delivery and legislation

What is the most appropriate way to phase out the Basic Payment Scheme to start implementation of the new schemes?

See Qus 1 and 16 above.

Question 18 of 20

From Chapter 8: Transition, delivery and legislation

How can we simplify the current administration and delivery of the Basic Payment Scheme during the phased transition period?

See Qus 1 and 16 above.

Question 19 of 20

Welsh Language standards

Will the proposed land management programme have any effects (either positive or adverse) on:

- opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language;
- treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

The proposed schemes, if implemented appropriately, could enhance and strengthen Welsh language and culture, by supporting Welsh farmers, encouraging the next generation to stay on the land, and increasing local sense of place and identification with land and landscape and a regeneration of rural Wales.

Conversely, if small and very small farms do not survive, alienation and land abandonment could result with catastrophic consequences for Wales and Welsh culture and language.

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Do you wish to make any further comments?

WELSH GOVERNMENT: A potentially catastrophic barrier to the success of the schemes and delivery of the objectives would be failure on the part of politicians in Welsh Government to commit fully to their success. There must be an understanding that this is huge opportunity for Welsh farming and the environment, for the future of the Welsh people both in rural and in urban areas, and policy, political will and action, and funding, must all be in place to allow these proposals to succeed. We cannot afford to fail.

The Minister, Hannah Blythyn, stated at the Wales Biodiversity Conference on 19th September last that **biodiversity underpins ecosystems and reversing biodiversity declines is as big a challenge as climate change, and will require transformational change.**

This is undoubtedly correct, and some of that change will be required from politicians. Funding of both schemes must be maintained at a level where the objectives can be met. There will be no easy quick fixes, and payments from the Resilience funds must not under any circumstances be permitted to fund activities which will conflict with the objectives of the public goods fund.

This means that there cannot be a simple assumption that activities which have been supported from Rural Development funding grants will simply by virtue of having previously received support be appropriate for reward from the ERS.

For example, while we understand the intent to provide an income stream in uncertain times, we believe the application of public money to support investment in intensive poultry has been entirely inappropriate - in the absence of any political will to monitor and contain the environmental impacts of this industry, or provide adequate advice to farmers on siting and pollution prevention. This is a policy failure which has been responsible for much environmental damage and social upset. It's essential that the ERS does not perpetuate or repeat this type of failure, which will undermine the achievement of the environmental objectives so critical to the future of us all here in Wales.

The further development of these schemes needs to create a legal duty on Welsh Ministers to fulfil the aims of the PGS, and the success of the scheme will require:

1. establishment of a minimum regulatory floor;
2. independent and expert monitoring;
3. polluter pays principle, and
4. adequate funding.

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES: The success of the scheme is also utterly dependent on the quality of advice NRW is empowered to provide. There is huge concern about the degree of independence enjoyed by NRW, as was very clear in responses to the 2015 Annual Review of NRW¹⁶. Recovery of ecosystems and biodiversity in Wales, essential to the future prosperity and health of everyone in Wales, whether resident in a rural or urban area, will only be possible if Welsh Government will have the benefit of the guidance of a politically independent, scientifically led, environment body.

The Memorandum of 4th September 2013 recommended formation of an Independent Scientific Advisory Committee to ensure quality of advice, along the lines of the English Science Advisory Council. CPRW Brecon & Radnor has raised this issue with NRW and been informed that *"The view of the board at that time was that we should utilise existing mechanisms such as the WG advisory committee, and our access to expert reviews through MoUs with other institutions..."*

We recognise that Wales hosts a huge pool of talent and scientific know-how, however there is a critical difference between having, necessarily limited, access to expert scientific advice and being under the scrutiny of a panel of experts whose remit is assuring **and challenging** the quality of evidence and advice given¹⁷.

Establishment of an Independent Scientific Advisory Committee would restore confidence in the quality of NRW advice and in Welsh Government's commitment to achievement of the improvements in resilience of ecosystems.

¹⁶ <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationdisplay.aspx?id=170>

See also [The framework for environmental regulation in Wales: Natural Resources Wales speaks with 'One Voice' - Has the statutory voice for nature been silenced?](#)

¹⁷ See Terms of Reference and Objectives (including '**provide constructive challenge on Defra's evidence**')
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/science-advisory-council/about/terms-of-reference>