

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17 Written Consultation Response

Name **Dr Ruth Williams, Landscape Institute Wales Policy Consultant**

Organisation and Sector **Landscape Institute Wales
NGO – Chartered Professional Body for Landscape Architects**

Contact Details **ruth@rwltd.co.uk mobile: 077 899 50 345
Landscape Institute
Charles Darwin House , 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU**

Background

Our first Corporate Plan will set the strategic intent for Natural Resources Wales. The consultation contains a series of proposals about **what** we want to achieve and **how** we want to work.

We would like you to tell us whether you think we are focussing on the right areas of work, whether there are any significant gaps and how we could work together in partnership to deliver our proposals. Your views on our proposed future ways of working would also be welcome. In short, how can we get the best results for Wales?

Following this consultation we will develop our full Corporate Plan.

How will we use your information?

We will publish a summary of responses on our website in which we will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations.

We will not publish names of individuals who respond.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we may be required to publish your response to this consultation, but we will not include any personal information. If you request your response to be kept confidential, we may still be required to provide a summary of it.

Please put a cross in the box if you wish your response to remain confidential.

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17

Written Consultation Response

Our purpose
Are our purpose, roles, shared outcomes and finances clear and understandable?
Yes.
Are there any ways that you would like to work with us to achieve these shared outcomes?
<p>Yes – in two main ways.</p> <p>The Landscape Institute is the chartered professional body for landscape architects, the Landscape Institute Wales, represents the membership in Wales through a committee made up of professional members and a Policy Consultant.</p> <p>Through our professional expertise in landscape planning, design and management, landscape architects are well placed to address the complexities of natural resource management and how change within rural and urban landscapes - often driven by single pressing issues - can, if carefully considered, be sympathetically integrated and realise wider opportunities with benefits to society, the environment and the economy.</p> <p>Therefore:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Landscape Institute would wish to support the development and implementation of these objectives at a policy level. In particular, the Landscape Institute has developed a number of policy papers which promote approaches which are relevant to NRW's objectives, namely: the '<i>Green Infrastructure</i>' approach, '<i>Climate Change</i>', '<i>Why Invest in Landscape</i>', '<i>Making it Home: the power of landscape to create good housing</i>' and has recently published its advocacy report on '<i>Health and Landscape</i>' and a widely acclaimed video on '<i>Water Sensitive Urban Design</i>'. These documents may be found at http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/ 2. Landscape architects tend to be employed in private practices or work as sole practitioners. They are also employed by local authorities, or by Government and its agencies, such as NRW. Landscape Architects in the public sector have historically had a greater involvement in the delivery of Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency priorities as part of their role as landscape professionals in their local authority areas. Landscape Architects in the private sector of work with public sector clients in delivering these priorities and with developers to plan, design and manage developments that are integrated with their context. As professionals across both sectors, landscape architects have an integrating outlook, often working across disciplines to deliver '<i>viable and vibrant places</i>', so are well qualified to assist with the delivery of the natural resources management approach.
Do you have any ideas of new ways we can fund our activities with our partners?
<p>Landscape Architects within local authorities are key to the delivery of NRW policy objectives and funding allocations within their areas, whilst those working in the private sector contribute to some of their work and work with other partners in the public and private sector to deliver infrastructure, smaller projects and large landscape planning studies across Wales, often carried out by private sector consultants on behalf of public sector clients including NRW.</p> <p>Those Landscape Architects in the public sector are responsible for a broad range of activities from economic regeneration to countryside management to planning advice and policy development and this needs to be acknowledged in the development of NRW policy.</p> <p>A possible mechanism to help fund activities with the public sector is the development of regional Green Infrastructure Partnerships which can oversee delivery of funding which may come through WG Nature Fund or the Environment Bill PERS proposals in relation to an area based catchment approach.</p> <p>Within the private sector there may be the opportunity to work with joint venture partners in terms of exemplar solutions to delivering green and blue infrastructure, which should be showcased for Wales. Partnerships and joint</p>

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17 Written Consultation Response

venture funding could be explored, notwithstanding the statutory duties of NRW as an organisation.

A good environment

Do you agree with our proposals and suggested ways of delivering them?

Your “**A Good Environment**” header includes an outcome: “**landscapes are enhanced**”.

> **The Landscape Institute strongly welcomes this, but it needs to be backed up by NRW policies.**

On **Climate Change** you say: “the top priorities are to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, and **protect natural carbon sinks**.”

> **The Landscape Institute strongly supports the need for Wales to be more resilient to changing weather patterns, but it needs to be supported by a Green Infrastructure approach.**

> **In terms of ‘carbon sinks’: the Landscape Institute recommends exploring natural systems for carbon sequestration through re-watering landscapes, through transforming soils and other management systems.**

On **Biodiversity loss** you say: Many of our habitats and wildlife species are in serious decline...we need to help to slow, and where possible, reverse habitat and biodiversity loss.

> **The Landscape Institute strongly welcomes this and, again, would recommend integrating biodiversity objectives in a Green Infrastructure approach.**

Have we missed out anything significant?

Yes – there is no detail re landscapes or seascapes.

So while your header on “**A Good Environment**” includes an outcome: “**landscapes are enhanced**”, the subsequent proposals are silent on how this will be achieved.

The Landscape Institute would be pleased to work with you to develop such proposals in line with the policy direction set out for Landscape in the Environment Bill and Taking the Long View – for protected landscapes. We would also welcome NRW’s clarification on how it will further the objectives of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) whilst still maintaining its focus on protected landscapes.

The ELC reminds us that “ordinary everyday” landscapes are the background for people’s lives and it highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes and establishing procedures for the general public and other stakeholders to participate in policy creation and implementation. The Landscape Institute would be pleased to assist NRW in developing such policies.

How do we best work in partnership with you to deliver these? What can you do to help?

Through the establishment of regional Green Infrastructure partnerships – and a dedicated Green Infrastructure team within NRW.

Landscape Architects are ideally qualified to help you deliver many of your Proposals on page 12, especially: “Working with land owners, water companies and others to manage our water resources...”

“...improve the extent, quality and connectivity of our priority habitats and secure viable populations of priority species.”

p. 13 “Supporting the establishment of new woodlands...”

NRW has a very important duty to conserve landscape and mediate the sustainable future of an asset, which is at the

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17

Written Consultation Response

heart of Wales' national cultural identity. It is therefore imperative that the body is resourced and mandated to use the professional experience of landscape specialists particularly in the following areas:

- The protection of nationally significant designated and non-designated landscape
- Planning consultations
- The identification, promotion and as necessary the designation of new nationally significant landscape
- Developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes
- Opportunities to create best practice and exemplary work to celebrate the uniqueness of Wales

all this would ensure the landscape's long term conservation, advocacy for the landscape, and in the provision of guidance and solutions for sustainable natural resource management and use.

Site specific appropriate delivery of landscape scale ecosystem services and planning consultation responses relies upon the right professionals being available in the right location with the appropriate qualifications and experience. We would encourage NRW to review its landscape architect resource and how it outsources work to the private sector in order to cover the landscape pressures particular to Wales, and the statutory response period for planning consultations, and the geographical regions. Previously there have been some examples of unhelpful planning consultation responses from CCW where, for example, biodiversity specialists have passed comment on landscape character and visual impact issues that they have not been qualified to make, or in the absence of any comment on landscape due to lack of resource within CCW, there has been an inferred 'no objection'. NRW could work better with Local Planning Authorities and ensure better responses to the private sector through their local agents in this area to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

Good for people

Do you agree with our proposals and suggested ways of delivering them?

The Landscape Institute **strongly supports** your '**need for change**' introduction on page 14 and the following points in particular:

p.14...*improve physical and mental health...*

p.15...*support jobs and green growth based around the natural environment.....supporting enterprise opportunities...*

...*safe, welcoming and high quality recreation and access, particularly for those communities with little current access to natural green space.*

...*help improve both physical and mental health wellbeing, especially in our most disadvantaged communities.*

p.16...*improving cultural heritage and landscape distinctiveness...*

Increasing urban tree cover and highlighting the benefits that urban trees can provide.

...*opportunities for community regeneration and access, and ensuring that local communities benefit from renewable energy developments.*

Again we would refer you to the Landscape Institute's policy and advocacy publications listed above.

There may be opportunities to work with Welsh Universities to deliver a more holistic approach to specific research/projects within this sphere of work.

Have we missed out anything significant

On page 16, we suggest you add “professional bodies” to your list: “working with schools, colleges, employers and voluntary sector organisations to enhance skills development and training, helping to lead to employment.”

The Landscape Institute feels there is a huge need and opportunity to reconnect children to natural systems.

How do we best work in partnership with you to deliver these? What can you do to help?

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17

Written Consultation Response

Health & Wellbeing proposal:

The Landscape Institute has recently researched and published a report on '*Health and Landscape*' which proposes approaches which could be most helpful to delivery of this objective (<http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/health.php>) .

In terms of the proposal on page 15 to **decrease the risk of flooding**, the Landscape Institute has **extensive expertise in flood risk reduction through land management**, and through its work on **Green Infrastructure**.

Good for business

Do you agree with our proposals and suggested ways of delivering them?

We suggest a greater focus on Green Infrastructure opportunities such as community, health and well-being, and socio-economic benefits, that natural resources provide for the economy rather than focusing primarily on environmental protection i.e. focus on benefits not constraints, for example, the role that an attractive landscape setting plays in business decisions about where to invest in development.

Have we missed out anything significant?

In this whole section, the focus is on regulation such as waste management and pollution control. The Landscape Institute recommends NRW thinks in terms of a much wider definition of 'best practice environmental management' to include best use of land as exemplified in **the Green Infrastructure approach**.

On page 18, the Landscape Institute strongly recommends you add "**Green Infrastructure**" in your second proposal about infrastructure.

How can you best work in partnership with us to deliver these?

The Landscape Institute would be pleased to work with NRW to **increase awareness and understanding amongst business of the economic case for adopting a Green Infrastructure approach**. This would be helped by the establishment of regional Green Infrastructure partnerships, and a dedicated Green Infrastructure team within NRW. There is already a body of research which has recently been commissioned by Natural England that supports this. The Landscape Institute Wales is currently seeking to run a seminar with Natural England to understand the findings behind their recent work on this.

Using good knowledge

Do you agree with our proposals and suggested ways of delivering them?

We agree.

Have we missed out anything significant?

No comment.

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17

Written Consultation Response

How can you best work in partnership with us to deliver these?

The Landscape Institute and the Landscape Institute Wales would be pleased to share relevant information with NRW and in particular, case studies from its members on key topics.

A landscape-led Green Infrastructure approach, when delivered through local authorities, could enable a coordinated approach towards community ownership and delivery, taking advantage of established partnerships and volunteer groups.

How we will work

Do you agree with how we plan to develop our organisation?

The Landscape Institute is concerned there is an apparent lack of sufficient Landscape Architect expertise within the NRW staff complement or of understanding of how a network of professional expertise from the private sector could complement the work of NRW.

Not only does this affect NRW's capability to deal with casework, and policy development, but also we feel more support and professional expertise from Landscape Architects on the staff would have much to contribute to your development of the integrated natural resources management approach. There is also potential to outsource discrete pieces of work to support NRW's policy development and planning for the landscape of Wales.

What would make it easier for you to work with us?

An annual meeting between the Landscape Institute Wales (LIW) branch chair and NRW to raise strategic matters of mutual interest and concern, and ensure opportunities for working partnerships are identified early.

Within the public sector the LIW branch members have already set up South Wales & North Wales Landscape groups, which are useful forums for the discussion of key issues. Officers from the Government and NRW have contributed to and attended these meetings.

Reporting our delivery

Is this the right approach to assessing our delivery?

This looks a good approach, but baselines are not mentioned. These will need to be set in order to have a robust foundation upon which to build the performance reviews into the future.

Do you know of specific indicators you think we should track?

The Landscape Institute recommends that the Green Infrastructure approach should be at the core of local authority documents, such as Local Plans, Infrastructure Development Plans and development briefs.

Progress with production of a coordinated set of landscape character assessments for all parts of Wales.

Proposals for Corporate Plan 2014-17

Written Consultation Response

What will success look like?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">>The Green Infrastructure approach is part of a shared vision – one that appreciates landscape character, sense of place and functionality.>Policy and strategies for the landscape clearly articulate the vision, priorities, responsibilities and actions needed to plan, deliver and manage projects to the benefit of the landscape of Wales.>Public and private sector landowners and managers are involved in planning and design for the landscape, as their buy-in and expertise is vital to its long-term success.>The ongoing management and maintenance of our Green infrastructure is well-funded – critical if it is to continue to deliver long-term benefits.>Creative thinking generates capital and revenue from multifunctional land – direct income from renewable energy, food production or events, or indirect savings by reducing flood risk and cutting the cost of cooling in urban areas during hot weather.>There is general awareness of how the landscape can deliver multiple benefits simultaneously, from boosting the bottom line to mitigating the effects of climate change.

Additional comments
Are there any further comments you would like to make?
No comment.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

We will publish a summary of the responses on our website and use your views to help develop our Corporate Plan, which will be published in March 2014.

For any further comments, queries or to provide your response in an alternative format please contact corporate.planning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk