



Arbenigwyr mewn Busnes  
Experts in Business

# FSB Wales response to the Welsh Government

## Development of the Natural Resources Policy

February 2017

**Ff/T** 029 2074 7406  
**E** wales.policy@fsb.org.uk  
**W** fsb.wales

**C/A** 1 Cleeve House,  
Lambourne Crescent,  
Caerdydd, CF14 5GP

**Swyddfa Gofrestredig | Registered Office:**  
National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses Limited,  
Sir Frank Whittle Way, Blackpool Business Park, Blackpool, FY4 2FE

**Cofrestrwyd yn Lloegr Rhif | Registered in England:** 1263540



Arbenigwyr mewn Busnes  
Experts in Business

## About FSB Wales

FSB Wales is the authoritative voice of businesses in Wales. With 10,000 members, a Welsh Policy Unit, two regional committees and twelve branch committees; FSB Wales is in constant contact with business at a grassroots level. It undertakes regular online surveys of its members as well as a biennial membership survey on a wide range of issues and concerns facing small business.

## Introduction

- 1.1. FSB Wales welcomes the Welsh Government's consultation on its proposed Natural Resources Policy. The creation of such should provide greater confidence and a richer evidence-base to support the delivery of Welsh Government's economic priorities in both the short and long-term.
- 1.2. If Wales is to function properly as an economic entity then its smaller firms will need to effectively utilise our natural resources in sustainable ways that ensures people and products are able to get where they need to in good time. We commented on how to deliver a more sustainable and resilient Welsh economy as part of our 2016 manifesto *A Better Way for Wales*.<sup>1</sup>

## The issue

- 2.1. FSB Wales welcomes the Welsh Government's evidence based approach and its use of the "State of Natural Resources Report" to set the background to this policy. We very much hope this document will be updated to reflect the latest science and thinking on Wales' natural resources. It is also encouraging to see Welsh Government recognise the economic value of our natural resources and our environment and the role this plays in supporting many sectors which are dominated by small and medium sized enterprises.
- 2.2. Many SMEs in sectors such as agriculture, fishing, forestry and tourism depend on the sustainable exploitation of our natural resources – and may also be unduly effected by global forces that are beyond their immediate control. The Welsh Government therefore has a key role in promoting sustainable management of natural resources in a locally and globally sensitive manner. Climate change and biodiversity are global challenges whose effects are likely to be felt at a local level.
- 2.3. Natural Resources policy should be a steward to guide the future of Welsh natural resources to weather changes in the global climate and economy.

---

<sup>1</sup> FSB Wales. 2016. *A Better Way for Wales: building our economy on the SME foundation*.



Arbenigwyr mewn Busnes  
Experts in Business

## Themes

- 3.1. It is essential that Natural Resources Policy reflects the broad priorities of the Programme for Government, and the emerging “four themes”. Of particular interest to the FSB is how Natural Resources Policy will be informed by the theme of “prosperous and secure” and how SMEs, sustainably utilising our energy, water and environmental resources can contribute to creating a resilient Welsh economy.
- 3.2. There is significant potential for growth in the green economy, and we would wish to see future programmes aligned towards supporting SMEs in this area to grow in a sustainable fashion.
- 3.3. In terms of energy efficiency, there is potential to significantly increase the energy efficiency of Wales’ commercial buildings. Whilst work has been undertaken to improve (some) domestic stock due to the wider health and social benefits of eradicating fuel poverty, FSB Wales feels there is low hanging fruit in the commercial sector too.
- 3.4. The Welsh Government, alongside new bodies such as the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales have a potential role in supporting green growth amongst Welsh SMEs by identifying particular areas of need. These may include unlocking additional grid capacity in parts of Wales where access is currently limited to increase renewables deployment.

## Other issues

- 7.1. The Natural Resources Policy should be a future looking and future proof document. Similar to the proposed long term vision of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales, **the Natural Resource Policy should be a 30 year strategy for Wales’ natural resources**. This should then be reported on and updated frequently, in line with Natural Resources Wales reflections on the state of Wales’ natural resources.
- 7.2. **A report on the Natural Resources Policy should be laid before the National Assembly for Wales on an annual basis.**
- 7.3. The recommendations of the reports would be for the Welsh Government to consider and respond to. **A response should be published within a year to the long-term strategy** and within a reasonable timeframe for more frequent updates and reports.



Arbenigwyr mewn Busnes  
Experts in Business

- 7.4. Natural Resources Policy **needs to be explicitly reflected within the Welsh Government's economic development strategy**, recognising the pivotal role it will have in the development of infrastructure priorities.
- 7.5. Natural Resources Policy should have a role in guiding and providing and evidence-base for the **National Development Framework** and any **Strategic Development Plans** emerging from the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.