

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

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Cathays Park
Cardiff,
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24 March 2015

I am writing on behalf of the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales – who are carrying out an independent review concerning Wales’ National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) commissioned by the Minister for Natural Resources.

As you may be aware the Minister, as well as the wider Welsh Government Cabinet, has considered our Stage One report concerning the purposes and duties of designated landscapes, and whether there should be one designation covering both National Parks and AONBs. The report was received positively and the Minister has asked the Review to continue onto Stage Two of our work examining the governance arrangements of the two designations.

We have resolved, again, to involve stakeholders in gathering evidence over the forthcoming months; and we look forward to full and frank discussions around designated landscape governance. We want evidence to better understand what works; where change is required, and what are the optimum governance arrangements to achieve the Minister’s challenge that:

“...designated landscapes become international exemplars of sustainability... living landscapes with vibrant, resilient communities, with extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, thriving eco-systems and rich bio-diversity. With the right leadership they have the potential to be areas where innovative solutions to the challenges of sustainability in fragile rural areas are tried and tested, understood and publicised.

As we move forward in Wales to develop our own ways of delivering public services associated with planning, regulating land use and managing our natural resources, it’s vital that the National Parks and AONBs are not left behind.”

We will consider the medium to long term vision and ambitions of our designated landscapes in the light of our earlier, Stage One report and recommendations, before considering the most effective delivery mechanisms for achieving that vision, ambition and direction of travel. This raises an important and timely “*grand challenge*” for the designated landscapes which encompasses this question: *what are the most effective governance arrangements for designated landscapes that allow them to lead on and meet ambitious outcomes within and for Wales?* The Panel will also consider comparisons with other governance models, both inside and outside the UK, to feed into this work.

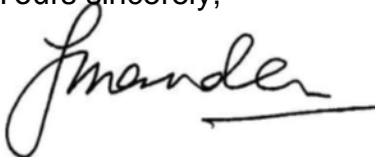
It has been made very clear to us that the Welsh Government as a whole regard designated landscapes as national assets which can deliver multiple benefits. They will be expected to assist the nation in achieving wider, ambitious social, economic as well and environmental priorities, while remaining distinctive, special landscapes. They will also be expected to become exemplars in facilitating cross portfolio working in such areas as health, education and tourism; tackling poverty and creating real progress around 'green growth'.

The Review Panel shall be pleased if you or your organisation will submit written evidence to them on designated landscape governance **up until 29th May 2015**. This letter sets out the preamble to Stage Two, while the questions on which we welcome your views and evidence can be found on the following page. **We also intend to conduct evidence gathering sessions with stakeholders in mid-late May.** **Please note that the Review Secretariat may approach you/your organisation in due course.**

Following the above deadline the evidence will be analysed, before informing the final report which is due to be delivered to the Minister for Natural Resources in late July 2015.

Stage Two presents us with an opportunity to create a realistic vision and governance framework for Wales' designated landscapes that could enable them to deliver for current and future generations. We look forward to your continued engagement, evidence and contributions.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Terry Marsden
Chair
The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Please submit evidence and comments by 29th May 2015:

By post:

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales
Third Floor, South Core, C04
Welsh Government, Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

By email:

designatedlandscapesreview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

The Stage One report can be accessed online via www.tinyurl.com/DLRWales

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Stage Two

Background

Welsh Ministers want to ensure that Wales' designated landscapes are equipped to meet current and future challenges, and they become internationally recognised exemplars for sustainability.

They commissioned this review in September 2014 to consider whether the current arrangements will deliver these objectives and, if not, what changes should be made in order to achieve them. The Review will engage with the public and designated landscape stakeholders in order to collate, examine and assess evidence concerning the designation, purposes, aims and governance of designated landscapes in Wales.

In the medium to long term, the new arrangements must enable any future body/bodies that govern our designated landscapes to further develop and enhance their strategic, policy making and operational delivery abilities such that they will:

- i. Deliver on designated landscape purposes.
- ii. Ensure the special qualities of designated landscape are protected.
- iii. Maximise the potential of these areas.
- iv. Support Natural Resource Management.
- v. Be exemplars particularly in landscape management and sustainability.
- vi. Develop clear and consistent ways of collaborating
- vii. Secure national leadership and yield the most effective use of resources.
- viii. Avoid duplication and maximise the use of scarce expertise.
- ix. Reinforce local accountability and decision making.

In January 2015 the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales reported on Stage One which examined the purposes and duties of designated landscapes, and whether there should be one designation covering both National Parks and AONBs.

Remit and Terms of Reference

The Minister for Natural Resources has since provided an update concerning the Review and has written to the Chairman of the Review, Prof. Terry Marsden (for ease of reference, enclosed) to set out the remit and terms of reference for Stage Two.

Within this stage the Review has been asked to consider:

- The governance and managements arrangements of our designated landscapes;
- How any future governing body/bodies would best promote collaboration and joint working while avoiding duplication;
- How any future governing body would best reinforce local accountability and decision making

The Review has also been asked to consider the future role of National Park Authorities as planning authorities; how the boards of these national assets can better reflect Welsh society in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity and specific issues of National Park Authority governance raised by the Review of Public Service and Delivery last year.

The following questions have been developed to help the Review identify and collate the evidence required to be able to reach its Stage Two conclusions. The first question, is referred to as the “Grand Challenge” by Professor Marsden in his covering letter/preamble, the additional questions have been constructed to assist the Panel and others in reaching their conclusions.

Questions for Stage Two

1	<p>What are the most effective governance arrangements for designated landscapes that allow them to lead on and meet ambitious outcomes within and for Wales?</p> <p>In order to answer this question you may want to consider and respond to these additional, related questions:</p>
2	<p>In light of the Review’s Stage One report and recommendations and the Minister for Natural Resources’ written statement (dated the 4th March) what is your vision and ambition for the direction of Wales’s designated landscapes in the medium to long term?</p>
3	<p>From a governance perspective, what factors are preventing and/or likely to prevent designated landscapes from achieving the vision and ambition you set out in response to question 2?</p>
4	<p>From a governance perspective, what factors will allow designated landscapes to achieve the vision and ambition you set out in response to question 2?</p>
5	<p>Are there other designated landscape/protected area governance models/approaches you wish to bring to the attention of the Review?</p>



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Update on the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales**

DATE **4 March 2015**

BY **Carl Sargeant Minister for Natural Resources**

On 25 September 2014 I announced an independent review into the purpose and governance of the designated landscapes in Wales, the three National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This two stage review would firstly examine the designations themselves looking at their purposes and the merits of classifying Wales' designated landscapes under one type of designation, before then considering the associated governance arrangements.

When I launched this Review I set out my own commitment to the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These areas are highly valued. They are integral to Wales' national identity and are recognised internationally as part of a global family of protected areas. I am proud that a quarter of Wales is recognised in this way. They are assets that we should celebrate and protect, but also continue to harness to tackle the environmental and economic challenges that we face. They have a valuable contribution to make to the green growth and natural resource management agenda.

I want to see our designated landscapes become international exemplars of sustainability. They should be living landscapes with vibrant, resilient communities, with extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, thriving ecosystems and rich biodiversity. With the right leadership they have the potential to be areas where new innovative solutions to the challenges of sustainability in fragile rural areas are tried and tested, understood and publicised.

The purpose of the Review is to gather and analyse evidence in support of a comprehensive set of recommendations which should ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to realise their ambition, while building upon their internationally recognised status and brand.

As we move forward in Wales to develop our own ways of delivering public services associated with planning, regulating land use and managing our natural resources, it's vital that the National Parks and AONBs are not left behind. Reform will be

necessary to ensure that these areas prosper through their continued protection while maximizing the benefits they provide to the people of Wales.

So far the Review has considered whether the purpose and identity of the designated landscapes should be changed. Between late September and late November 2014 the Panel involved a wide range of designated landscape interests including constituent local authorities, community councils and the WLGA; the farming unions; the Federation of Small Businesses and Wales Tourism Alliance; The Welsh Language Commissioner; Natural Resources Wales and RTPI Cymru. Eight workshops (geographically within or near each designated area) were held with members of the public. Finally, meetings were held with officials from the Welsh Government and the Sustainable Futures Commissioner, Peter Davies.

The Panel has made six recommendations which are a modest package of amendments to the designations, see Annex 1. I expect that as the Panel expands its evidence base it will need to reflect on and amend these initial recommendations. The report of Stage one will now provide the basis for proceeding to Stage two of the review as set out in the original terms of reference. This includes:

- i. Review the governance and management arrangements of the designated landscapes;
- ii. Review and examine how any governing body/bodies would best promote collaboration and joint working while avoiding duplication; and
- iii. Review and examine the best way for any future governing body to reinforce local accountability and decision making.

Both designations currently have different governance arrangements.

The Environment Act 1995 led to the creation of independent National Park Authorities for each of the National Parks in Wales. Each Park is governed by a board comprising two thirds local councillors appointed by constituent local authorities, and one third appointed by The Welsh Ministers. Their approved revenue expenditure is set each year by The Welsh Ministers, and the authorities levy their constituent authorities for the balance of their operational budget. National Park Authorities are the planning authorities for their areas. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are overseen by a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), with any services embedded within constituent local authorities. There is no central funding. The JAC is a statutory consultee on planning applications for the area.

I look forward to the second phase of the review, and to working with the Parks and AONBs to develop their ambition and to secure for them a future which builds on the special nature of these areas. I will respond to the Panel's recommendations when the review is completed.

The Panel's first stage report is available at <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/countrysidecoastalaccess/landscapes/?lang=en>

The final report will be available in July.

Annex 1: Recommendations from the first report of the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Recommendation 1

We recommend that there should not be a single designation.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that there is ONE set of statutory Purposes and an associated single statutory Duty for both designations.

Recommendation 3

We recommend changing the name of “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONBs) to “National Landscapes of Wales”

Recommendation 4

We recommend the establishment of a consistent and resilient nomenclature as well as structure, including:

“The National Designated Landscapes of Wales”

“National Parks” and “National Landscapes” which are “The Equivalent Designations”

The Equivalent Designations would possess Identical Statutory Purposes & Duties

Recommendation 5

We recommend there should be THREE interlocking statutory purposes for both the National Parks *and* National Landscapes.

These are:

“To conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape and seascape qualities of the area,”

(the Conservation Purpose)

“To promote physical and mental well-being through the enjoyment and understanding of the landscape of the area,”

(the Human Well-being Purpose)

“To promote sustainable forms of natural resource management and economic and community development which support the cultural heritage of the area.”

(the Sustainable Resource Management Purpose)

Recommendation 6

We recommend a new single Statutory Duty that removes the weak “have regard to” prefixes in the current duties on relevant public bodies, and replaces them with a single and clear duty:

“To contribute to the delivery of the three Purposes of the National Designated Landscapes.”

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Prof. Terry Marsden,
Chair of the "Review of Designated Landscapes in
Wales"
Sustainable Places Research Institute
33 Park Place,
Cardiff,
CF10 3BA

3rd March 2015

Dear Terry,

I would like to thank you, John and Ruth for your work to date on the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, and for the recommendations you have presented from the first stage. The report is a useful record of the progress made and provides the basis for proceeding to the next stage.

As you continue your work on the review can I take this opportunity to remind you that its purpose is to gather and analyse evidence in support of a comprehensive set of recommendations which should ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally recognised status.

In announcing the review I set out my own commitment to seeing the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty become international exemplars of sustainability: living landscapes with vibrant, resilient communities, providing extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, tackling social issues and, creating thriving ecosystems which are rich in biodiversity. I believe they have the potential to act as areas where new innovative solutions to the challenges of sustainability and natural resource management can be tried, tested, understood and publicised. Your review is an important step in helping realise this ambition.

The remit for your next stage is to consider:

- the governance and management arrangements of our designated landscapes;
- how any future governing body/bodies would best promote collaboration and joint working while avoiding duplication;
- how any future governing body would best reinforce local accountability and decision making.

I expect that as you expand on your evidence base you will need to reflect and amend your initial recommendations. Your final report due in July should provide a single set of

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recommendations which encompass both stages of the review. This report will need to demonstrate clearly how the Panel has considered evidence from witnesses and literature, with clear analysis in support of its recommendations. It is important that any recommendations clearly articulate the issue they seek to address and evidence the difference in delivery that you would expect as a result of their implementation.

The role of National Park Authorities as Planning Authorities and whether this should continue has been raised and debated on many occasions. I believe that 25 local planning authorities are too many for a country and population the size of Wales. We need larger, more resilient bodies with a range of specialist skills so that they are better equipped to deliver for communities. They should have the potential to deliver an efficient and resilient planning service. In moving forward I am concerned that the National Parks are not left behind. Our designated landscapes demand and deserve the best possible service in terms of development and management and so your consideration of governance must encompass the future role of National Park Authorities as planning authorities.

In your consideration of representation and accountability you should have regard to board balance in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity.

I look forward to considering your report and recommendations later this year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources