

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Remit and Terms of Reference

Welsh Ministers want to ensure that designated landscapes are equipped to meet current and future challenges, and they become internationally recognised exemplars for sustainability. They have commissioned this review 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.

This review will be split into two stages. Stage one will examine the designations themselves and stage two will follow, examining the governance arrangements of designated landscapes in light of the first stage recommendations to the Welsh Ministers.

Stage One

- the merits of classifying Wales' designated landscapes under one type of designation.
- the purposes of these designated landscapes.

Stage Two

- the governance and management arrangements of these 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.

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 the application of 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.

Welsh Ministers have not reached a view on whether National Park Authorities should retain planning functions. That will be determined separately. Stage 2 of the review will take that into account once a decision has been reached.

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Stage One

Preamble

Two types of designated landscape cover approximately a quarter of Wales. National Parks cover approximately twenty percent and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) cover the remaining five percent. Both designations originate from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. National Parks have two statutory purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area,
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the area's special qualities.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have a single statutory purpose:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Due to the number of statutory purposes, geographical size and governance arrangements National Parks and AONBs can be described as occupying different "tiers" of a designated landscape hierarchy.

In terms of their landscape and scenic beauty, both National Parks and AONBs are of equal importance. Planning Policy Wales states (5.3.6) *"National Parks and AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty."*

The legal duty on "relevant authorities" to have regard for the purposes of designated landscapes in undertaking their work is identical – section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 for National Parks and section 85(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in respect of AONBs.

National Parks and AONBs attract many millions of visitors each year to Wales and face similar environmental, economic and social pressures.

The designated landscape also meet internationally recognised standards. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognises the two types of designated landscapes as Category 5 protected areas.

In the future designated landscapes will be expected to deliver natural resource management and pursue the achievement of the six well-being goals as set out within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill:

Goal	Description
<i>A prosperous Wales.</i>	An innovative and productive, low carbon emission, economy that makes more efficient and proportionate use of resources; and which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities for a skilled and well-educated population.
<i>A resilient Wales.</i>	A biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.
<i>A healthier Wales.</i>	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
<i>A more equal Wales.</i>	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
<i>A Wales of cohesive communities.</i>	Attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.
<i>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.</i>	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

Sixty five years has passed since the legislation creating the original designations received royal assent. Welsh Ministers want to ensure that our designated landscapes are resilient enough to meet current and future challenges while retaining their distinctiveness and becoming internationally recognised exemplars for sustainability.

The Welsh Government has commissioned this review to consider whether the current arrangements will deliver these outcomes 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 examine, collate and assess evidence concerning the designation, purposes, aims and governance of designated landscapes in Wales.

The review will be split into two stages. Stage one will examine the possible alignment and purposes of designations while stage two will examine the governance arrangements of designated landscapes in Wales. The lines of questioning for stage two will be developed in light of the first stage recommendations to Welsh Ministers.

Questions for Stage One

1	Are designated landscapes equipped to meet the current and future needs of Wales?
	<p><i>In responding to this question you may want to think about and cover:</i></p> <p>The strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of designated landscape statutory purposes and statutory duties.</p> <p>Potential challenges and opportunities facing Wales' designated landscapes.</p> <p>Whether the current statutory purposes of designated landscapes and statutory duties on management bodies are capable of addressing the present and future challenges facing them.</p> <p>Whether new or revised purposes are necessary to improve the innovative potential of designated landscapes.</p> <p>Examples of innovative statutory/legislative purposes and/or aims of designated landscapes outside Wales.</p>
2	Should there be a single designation of protected landscape in Wales?
	<p><i>In responding to this question you may want to think about and cover:</i></p> <p>The specific merits, advantages and disadvantages in the current "two tier" system of statutory landscape designation since in certain respects the two existing designations are virtually indistinguishable.</p> <p>Whether a single designation could optimise the use of resources and scarce expertise; contribute to greater efficiencies and improve collaboration and coordination across Wales whilst maintaining the protection currently afforded to these landscapes.</p> <p>The implications for national and international standards concerning landscape and conservation of a single designation.</p> <p>The experience you or your organisation has had with one or both designations.</p> <p>Examples of designation alignment outside Wales and lessons to be learned.</p>