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* The consultation responses were received before the COVID-19 epidemic had a significant effect on Wales
Introduction

Background

The Snowdonia National Park Management Plan (Cynllun Eryri – pronounced “cyn-llin err-uhh-ree”), is a significant document in relation to the future of Snowdonia National Park. The National Park Authority is required by law to prepare a plan to provide effective management of the National Park, involving all those concerned with the future of Snowdonia. It sets out how we will all work together to look after Snowdonia National Park for future generations.

Cynllun Eryri reflects a change in the approach taken by the National Park Authority in creating a plan for managing Snowdonia. The plan has been developed in the true spirit of partnership not only with those organisations with statutory responsibilities, but with all organisations involved in some way in looking after Snowdonia for future generations.

This work has been spear-headed by our core Partnership group, Fforwm Eryri. Fforwm Eryri meets on a quarterly basis and is an opportunity for all those involved in shaping Snowdonia’s future to galvanise their approach to joint working in the region and beyond. The forum works together to establish collective mechanisms for development, delivery and monitoring of strategic objectives and actions within Cynllun Eryri.

The Plan sets out the current picture; our long-term vision for the area; high-level outcomes; short-term outcomes and an action plan.

The final consultation held between 3rd February - 13th of March 2020, formed the concluding part of the wider process of developing a new National Park Management Plan (see Appendix 1). This report summarises the result of the consultation.

Two-stage consultation process

Stage 1

The plan-making process was initiated in 2016-17 by researching and developing an in depth dataset - or ‘State of the Park Report’ - which collected all of the available information on the National Park area. This is available and searchable on our website and will be updated again in 2021-2.

Early ideas and opinions were explored in workshops with key partners and stakeholders as well as our members and staff.

A far-reaching, initial public consultation was held between 9th of July - 30th of September 2018. Opportunities for engagement included a public roadshow in the north and south of the National Park, three expert panel events, consultation packs posted to all community councils, a social media campaign and regular e-mails to all stakeholders. Significantly, nearly 60% of those that responded lived within the National Park area.

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1 See Annex 2 for a full list of Fforwm Eryri members
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For the initial consultation, a document was produced which set out the current picture and our vision for the future. It set out the big issues and opportunities for the National Park in the coming years. It also provided suggestions on how we could address these issues and capitalise on the opportunities.

A number of overarching challenges emerged from this data gathering process. These included the threat of climate change as well as mitigation measures such as carbon storage and sequestration. It included pressures on the tranquillity and landscape of Snowdonia from tourism, as well as the ongoing decline in biodiversity. A new and emerging challenge was the impact of Brexit and the need to ensure a skilled workforce post-Brexit. More than anything, it highlighted the impact all these elements could have on the Special Qualities of the National Park. The process also revealed where there were data gaps and where further research and understanding was required.

**Stage 2**

The views and ideas shared with us through the initial consultation were merged with the ‘Ways Forward’ suggested in the consultation document, to form the basis of six facilitated action-planning workshops. These were delivered in December 2018 - January 2019 with key decision makers from partner organisations.

Using a RACI matrix approach a draft set of actions emerged with key partners who will be helping us deliver Cynllun Eryri. The action plan was grouped around the three themes of Environment, Health & Well-being and Communities & Economy, which are in their turn reflective of the National Park’s core purposes and duty:

**Environment Act, 1995**

1. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
2. Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public

When National Parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to:

- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks

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3 RACI matrix is a responsibility assignment chart that maps out every task, milestone or key decision involved in completing a project and assigns which roles are Responsible for each action item, which personnel are Accountable, and, where appropriate, who needs to be Consulted or Informed. The acronym RACI stands for the four roles that stakeholders might play in any project: see [www.cio.com/article/2395825/project-management-how-to-design-a-successful-raci-project-plan.html](http://www.cio.com/article/2395825/project-management-how-to-design-a-successful-raci-project-plan.html)
From July – November 2019 a formal action plan was developed and circulated to stakeholders. Internal meetings were held with Partners, Heads of Service and all relevant officers within the Park Authority to confirm actions and monitoring indicators. Fforwm Eryri and National Park Authority members gave valuable input to the crafting of the full Plan which was developed throughout the end of 2019 – early 2020 ready for final public consultation.

As well as being a statutory requirement, the final public consultation was planned in order to understand if people felt that their views, concerns and ideas had been addressed sufficiently. We wanted to ensure that we had the go-ahead from those who live, work and visit Snowdonia National Park.

**Summary of Engagement Stats throughout the plan-making process**

- Number of consultations: 2
- Locations visited by the roadshow: 6
- Workshops: 10
- Fforwm Eryri meetings: 18
- Consultation video views: 47,495
- Reached on social media: 235,479
- National and local news articles: 10
About the final consultation

Aims and objectives

The main aim of the final consultation was:

- To ensure that Cynllun Eryri (the National Park Management Plan) reflects the objectives of those who live, work and operate in Snowdonia National Park.

Which in turn, would:

- Confirm the Partnership approach taken to safeguarding the future of the National Park.
- Encourage appreciation of what makes Snowdonia exceptional as a National Park (the “Special Qualities”).

The main purposes of the consultation were to:

- Reiterate the inclusive process of creating Cynllun Eryri
- Inform people about what we are trying to achieve with the Plan.
- Provide opportunities for statutory consultees, stakeholders and experts to confirm the main outcomes and policies.
- Ensure continued engagement of all communities in the National Park.

The approach we took

Open for 6 weeks from 3rd February – 13th March 2020, the final draft version of Cynllun Eryri was available for public comment in the following ways:

- Advance copy to local MPs and AMs
- A hard copy of the Plan was placed in all local libraries & Tourist Information Centres with questionnaires
- Our website was updated with online questionnaire and response facility
- A widely promoted social media campaign highlighting where the Plan could be accessed
- Targeted Face Book posts to residents of north west Wales
- E-mailing of the document to all community councils within the National Park
- Promotion via the National Park monthly newsletter
- Articles and interviews in the local and national press
- Opinion piece by Head of Engagement
- Emails at the beginning, middle and end of the consultation to all stakeholders on our database
- One to one meetings with key organisations, including Welsh Government
- School visits with easy read version of the Plan
- Partners recruited from Fforwm Eryri to hold a live Webinar in Welsh and English
- Targeted meeting attendance e.g. NFU Cymru, Cyngor Gwynedd Tourism Workshop
- Local businesses through Ambassador Training Day
The responses we received

109 responses were received through the online questionnaire. Their connection with the National Park is as follows:

![Bar Chart](Figure 1: On-line respondents’ connection to the National Park)

It is hugely encouraging to see so many people (84% of respondents) living and working in the National Park taking an interest in the outcome of the plan making process.

Four responses received were on behalf of organisations representing a much wider base: Teithiau Cerdded Ngogledd Cymru/North Wales Area Ramblers; Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Conwy; CLA Cymru and Save Our Rivers.

- Other organisations also sent in responses directly, those being:
  - Natural Resources Wales
  - Cadw
  - Cyngor Gwynedd
  - Campaign for National Parks
  - Cymdeithas Eryri
  - Ramblers Cymru
  - Un Llais Cymru
  - Woodland Trust / Coed Cadw
  - RSPB Cymru
  - Welsh Language Commissioner, Welsh Government
  - Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner, Welsh Government
  - Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Board Member

These organisations gave highly constructive comments, which have now been integrated into the final version of the Plan.
**What we found out**

**What did people think of the final product?**

Overwhelmingly people commented on the **look and design of the new Plan**. The intention to re-brand the Plan as a living document was widely congratulated and the accessibility of the information and the high quality photography was a big hit!

Many appreciated the ‘easy read’ version with 78% of respondents saying that they accessed this. 10% of on-line responses were in relation to the full Plan.

The high percentage of readers accessing the easy-read version only, has meant that some remarks of missing detail have been received. However, this detail is in the full Plan version.
Special Qualities of Snowdonia National Park

A clear message emerging from the initial consultation was that the Special Qualities of the National Park needed to be more visible in the Management Plan, as these are our core areas for protection and promotion, and our rationale for being designated as a National Park.

A significant portion of the Plan has therefore been dedicated to describing, promoting and developing the nine Special Qualities of the National Park.

We asked people: Do you think the Special Qualities of the National Park are described and illustrated well?

Respondents rated this section of the Plan on average 9 out of 10.

Here are some of the comments we received:

*Clearly identified and illustrated*

*It’s modern, comprehensive and detailed*

*We didn’t know how lucky we were to live in the National Park*

*It shows a wide variety of things that make Snowdonia special*

*The combination of beautiful drawings, compelling graphic work, interesting facts and pertinent examples combine to provide a very effective explanation of the nine Special Qualities.*

Long term goals

The Plan clearly sets out the long-term goals and vision of the National Park Authority and the Partnership on pages 85 – 89 (pages 33 - 38 of the easy read version).

We asked people if they agreed with these and overwhelmingly they said “Yes”.

However, we also had several comments that spoke to the background and specific agendas of those answering the consultation. Many of these issues are already acknowledged in the full Plan version. Balancing the different interests and aims of everyone has been the most successful part of the entire Plan-making process. It is great to see people recognising this and of all the comments received, potentially the ones we are most proud of are those which celebrate this pro-active working relationship such as:

*There seems to be good a balance of understanding between the importance of conservation, economy and well-being of communities*

*You have shown recognition for the world of nature and also for farmers who live within the Park*

*It is the co-operation and co-contribution that has been involved in its development - the joint aspirations. The ambition has to be high to achieve any success, and the good wishes of all stakeholders are driving the Plan forward.***

*Impressive co-operation between lots of diverse groups of people in the Park*
Eryri’s Environment

During the initial consultation the top issues identified under this heading were:

- Addressing the impact of tourism on the environment
- Protecting, restoring and expanding habitats through land management
- Ensuring that the future of land management is secure and that it supports Eryri’s special environment
- Greener travel in order to reduce carbon emissions
- Investigate the potential of visitor-payback in relation to protecting the environment
- Management and protection of the historical and cultural landscape
- Actively contributing towards reducing carbon emissions and enhancing carbon storage
- A pro-active approach to addressing the challenges of invasive species
- Engaging people with the environment in order to nurture a sense of custodianship
- Addressing issues with damaging recreational activities
- Ensuring the landscape of Eryri is protected from the visual impact of communication and energy production infrastructure

This time, we asked:

Under the theme of Eryri’s Environment pages 92 – 119 (or page 35 of the easy read version) do you believe that our Outcomes, Policies and Actions are aspirational yet achievable?

You said:

82% of the questionnaire responses said YES.

However, sustainable tourism, sustainable transport and availability of public transport was a major concern for respondents, and many continue to be worried over the role of agriculture in the future of the National Park following Brexit.
Eryri’s Health and Wellbeing

During the initial consultation the top issues identified under this theme were:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the benefits of the environment to health and well-being
- Refresh the way Snowdonia is marketed and branded
- Improve the sustainability and availability of public transport
- Improving information and education about the National Park
- Improved visitor infrastructure
- Improving digital connectivity
- Improved access opportunities for all to explore and understand Snowdonia

This time, we asked:

Under the theme of Eryri’s Health and Wellbeing on pages 120 – 139 (or page 36 of the easy read version) do you believe that our Outcomes, Policies and Actions are aspirational yet achievable?

You said:

80% of the questionnaire responses said YES.

However (as above) sustainable transport and availability of public transport came out as a major concern for many and several comments were received on the need to prioritise those who live in the National Park in terms of health and well-being.

Eryri’s Communities and Economy

During the initial consultation the top issues identified under this theme were:

- Supporting communities to adapt
- Affordable housing
- Impacts of Brexit on the rural economy
- Outward migration of young people
- Supporting and promoting the Welsh language
- More local decision making
- Working with settlements beyond the boundary but associated with the National Park
This time, we asked:

Under the theme of Eryri’s Communities and Economy on pages 140 – 153 (or page 38 of the easy read version) do you believe that our Outcomes, Policies and Actions are aspirational yet achievable?

You said:

79% of the questionnaire responses said YES.

However, many people expressed concern over the role of agriculture in the future and many also raised worries over local employment opportunities, availability of housing and business development opportunities.

This area of work is related to our duty as a National Park rather than our core purposes, and therefore is less within our control. These concerns require greater Partnership working which is something that we are committed to doing over the next 5 years. Working proactively with Cyngor Gwynedd and Conwy County Borough Council, will ensure that we are continuously striving to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities.

What is important to the young people of Snowdonia?

As part of the initial consultation we visited secondary schools across Snowdonia to find out what was important to the young people of the area. They will be the people that our decisions today will impact upon, and therefore it’s vital that they are able to have a strong input and influence on policies within Cynllun Eryri. They identified the following as areas of importance:

- Protecting and restoring habitats, species and ecosystems
- Climate change
- Pollution of river, lakes and the sea
- The impact of hill-walking and in particular erosion, litter and crowding
- Poor public transport
- Parking problems
- Decline in the number of Welsh speakers
- Lack of high quality jobs
- Outward migration of young people
- Lack of affordable housing
- Impact of Brexit on markets for produce

In this final consultation, we returned to Ysgol Bro Hyddgen in Machynlleth; Ysgol Eifionydd in Porthmadog; Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn and Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy in Llanrwst and spoke to approximately 120 students to ask if they felt Cynllun Eryri reflected their ideas. The young people we engaged with were aged 11 to 17 and were a collection of the School Council and Year 9 – 10 Geography GCSE students.

They were particularly grateful of the Easy Read version and as you can see from the distribution of responses in the map (figure 2), they were clearly inspired by the workshops.
A collection of their comments:

It’s modern and colourful, which makes it interesting.

It has helped me learn more about why Eryri is so special.

I believe that climate change and being eco-friendly is vital to conserve our habitats and to keep our landscapes as they are. I also strongly believe in creating opportunities for young people to help have an understanding of these problems because we are the generation that will need to make use of these strategies most.

The future plans for the National Park are focusing on ecological and long lasting solutions.

It inspires even though it is challenging and they want to do a lot to change our environment.

It considers young people by providing more opportunities without destroying the environment or our area, it improves the broadband that helps people. It is good for the people in our area.

Comments to consider:

It is extremely important to include young people and training which you can offer to them.

I want to know more about how I and the school can volunteer.

I don’t use the park very often because I don’t know what is going on there.

If I move away to live, I want to come back to the park to see what has changed and to see if Cynllun Eryri has worked.

We don’t feel that our area is prioritised as much as other locations.

We need more information on sustainable, safe and practical transport. Shuttle buses for rural areas and improved trains would be nice.

Overall

Positives:

- Huge support for the look and feel and readability of this management Plan
- Impressive co-operation between diverse groups of people in the Park makes the Plan highly credible.
- There is strong recognition of local / agricultural / conservation / tourism issues.
- Community, culture and language are placed at a higher level of consideration than in previous Plans.
- Ambitious and positive language.
- Recognition of people who live and work here.

There is a responsibility for us and our Partners to:

- Ensure that funding is sought to deliver on the actions and projects outlined in the Plan
- Continue to work closely across all sectors to balance the various interests in the National Park
- Increase the level of support to the agricultural sector over the difficult time ahead
- Act to address the climate emergency and global biodiversity loss
- Address the real concerns about lack of public transport
- Put the communities and economy of Eryri at the heart of all that we do
- Keep our Special Qualities exceptional
Statutory requirements

As part of the consultation process, we are also required to ask for any comments on an *Equality Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment* and *Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA)* of Cynllun Eryri.

We asked:

Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal of the draft Management Plan?
Do you have any comments on the Equality Impact Assessment of the draft Management Plan?
Do you have any comments on the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the draft Management Plan?

No comments on these were received.

*National Park Management Plans Guidance (CCW, 2007)* states that:

*In preparing the National Park Management Plan, NPAs are required to consult and take account of the observations of:*

- every principal council wholly or partly within the National Park
- the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales)

*The NPAs are also obliged to set up arrangements to inform and consult Community Councils within the National Park about their work.*

*The Welsh Assembly Government must be sent a copy of any Plan and associated materials.*

The above statutory requirements have been achieved a) throughout the Plan making process and b) during this final consultation.

What now?

We are delighted that we have received an affirmative response to Cynllun Eryri.

Several specific (rather than strategic) suggestions received during the consultation have been passed to relevant National Park officers to respond.

We are integrating some of the final comments and changes to be able to launch as soon as possible. We know we won't have covered everything and we can't find solutions for everyone's concerns, but as a Partnership, we are committed to working together for the benefit of this outstanding area in which we live and operate.

We plan to work hard over the next 5 years on this ambitious action Plan to ensure that we keep Eryri exceptional.
Appendices
Appendix 1: Summary of Plan Process

Heads of service workshop
December 2016
National Park all staff meeting workshop
November 2016

Fforwm Eryri Workshop
With Partners delivering in the National Park
October 2016

Stakeholder Register
Create and snowball register of all stakeholders
Spring 2017

Communication Plan
Create plan for communication & events during consultation
Spring 2017

Evidence Gathering Stage
State of the Park Report - Researching and gathering data on key issues
Spring - Summer 2017

Cynllun Eryri Final Consultation:
February 3rd – March 13th 2020*

Afon Mawddach:
©Jan Davies
Appendix 2: List of Members of Fforwm Eryri

- Snowdonia National Park Authority - 5 Members
- Snowdonia National Park CEO
- Snowdonia National Park Director
- Snowdonia National Park Partnerships Manager
- Snowdonia National Park representative from Planning and Policy
- Gwynedd County Council
- Conwy Borough Council
- Natural Resources Wales
- One Voice Wales
- National Trust Wales
- Farmers Union of Wales
- National Farmers’ Union of Wales
- Cadw
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Outdoor Partnership
- Public Health Wales
- Country Land & Business Association (Wales)
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Snowdonia Active
- Snowdonia Society
- Coed Cymru
- RSPB
- Prifysgol Bangor
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai