

DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

DATE OF DECISION 18 December 2024

DATE DECISION PUBLISHED 20 December 2024

DATE DECISION WILL COME INTO FORCE and implemented,
unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of
the Gwynedd Council Constitution 31 December 2024

Cabinet Member: Cllr Craig ab Iago, Cabinet Member Environment

SUBJECT

New Welsh National Park Proposal - Public Consultation 2024

DECISION: Submission of Gwynedd Council's response to NRW's proposal for the New Wales National Park.

REASON WHY THE DECISION IS NEEDED


Please see attached officer report.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Consultation with
Gwynedd Council Statutory Officers
Local Member
The results of the consultations are reported upon in the attached report

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET CABINET DECISION SHEET – OFFICER'S REPORT

Name and title of Cabinet Member(s):	Craig ab Iago – Environment Cabinet Member
Name and title of Report Author :	Rebeca Jones – Planning Policy Manager
Date the Decision was Taken:	18.12.2024
Signature of Cabinet Member(s):	

Topic : New Welsh National Park Proposal - Public Consultation 2024

Recommendation for the Resolution :

Submission of Gwynedd Council's response to NRW's proposal for the New Wales National Park.

Reason for the need for the Resolution :

Responding to a public consultation on the proposal for a New Park. An area of the proposed new Park falls into Gwynedd LPA – Llandderfel Area.

Rationale and justification for arriving at the Decision :

Natural Resources Wales is undertaking a public consultation about the New National Park ([Wales's New National Park Proposal - Public Consultation 2024 - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)) and this is an opportunity to provide initial comments and raising concerns on the intention ahead of the full statutory consultation to take place late in 2025. A letter of response is attached.

Record of any interest declared by any Cabinet Member consulted and any dispensation from a Standards Committee :

d/b

Any consultations held before the Decision was made :

d/b

Chief Finance Officer – The decision sought does not create a direct financial commitment, but there would probably be financial implications for Cyngor Gwynedd if the boundaries of the national park included parts of Gwynedd. I am of the opinion that the contents of the response are a fair reflection of the financial implications of creating a new National Park

Monitoring Officer – This is an initial consultation on the proposed establishment of a new National Park in North Wales. As one of the councils falling within the proposed boundaries of the new Park it is important that Gwynedd responds to the consultations. As set out in the draft response attention must also be held to the exact location of the boundaries and the size of the Council area here which is within the boundaries. As the plans develop the Council will need to come to a position on these constitutional issues and bring that forward through formal arrangements. I'm satisfied that these are currently only initial opinions. These will have corporate implications which need to be determined accordingly

Local Member(s) – Councillor Elwyn Edwards – Agree with the response that has been prepared.

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed new national park. Although this consultation relates to the proposed boundary of the new park and affects only a small area of Gwynedd the proposal has raised questions/concerns which are set out below:

House Prices

Research undertaken by *Nationwide* shows that house prices can rise by up to 25% within a National Park. <https://www.nationwidehousepriceindex.co.uk/reports/national-parks-and-areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-boost-house-prices-by-up-to-25-percent>. In Gwynedd average house prices are high compared to the average wage which means a significant number of the population are priced out of the market in Gwynedd. The creation of a new National Park could have an impact on house prices by making the area more attractive, resulting in housing affordability being further out of reach of local people.

Rural Economy

The area around Llandderfel is very rural where agriculture is one of the main industries. Diversification is important for the agricultural sector and can help the viability of businesses in the countryside. The concern is that a new National Park designation will introduce more stringent policies regarding developments that are acceptable within the area. The National Park purposes provide clear statutory responsibilities to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and major developments are not favourably considered unless there are exceptional circumstances for doing so.

Visitor Economy and Tourism.

Over-tourism is an issue of concern in parts of Gwynedd particularly in Eryri National Park. This leads to parking problems, congestion on the local roads, litter and pollution leading to conflict with the local community. There is concern that the designation of a National Park in this area will lead to an increase in the number of people visiting the already popular area and therefore lead to an exacerbation of these problems. In addition, the designation of a National Park could lead to an increase in the number of second homes and short-term holiday lets which is a matter of concern for Gwynedd Council. Our concerns were highlighted with the introduction of an Article 4 direction, which has been in effect since 1st September 2024. It was introduced to seek to protect the housing stock in the Local Planning Area by making it necessary to submit a planning application to change the use of a main residence to a second home or short-term holiday let. Increases in the number of second homes and short-term holiday lets can lead to an increase in house prices, affecting the affordability of housing for local people which in turn can have a negative impact on the Welsh language.

Welsh language

The issues identified above e.g. the lack of availability of housing which is affordable for local people can have a negative impact on the Welsh language. To ensure that the Welsh language is protected as to ensure growth in the language it is necessary to try to facilitate sustainable communities where housing is available to the local population. The research that Gwynedd Council has undertaken to justify the introduction of Article 4 guidance clearly shows that there is a correlation between high numbers of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation and the Welsh language.

It is noted that if the National Park is established then a new name would be needed, Welsh names have been proposed and this is welcomed and supported.

Governance

There are currently no details on how the new National Park will be Governed. Clearer details on this will be required before the statutory consultation, to give Cyngor Gwynedd a reasonable opportunity to give an opinion on this. As only a small part of the new national parks falls within Gwynedd, we want the opportunity to consider the appropriateness of submitting a response that would address this. Specifically, on whether the Council would want to be one of the authorities represented or contribute to the Authority? This would be similar to the situation in the south of Snowdonia National Park which is within the boundaries of Powys Council but they are not part of Snowdonia National Park Authority

Planning

The creation of a new National Park will mean the creation of a new Local Planning Authority with statutory duties in the planning field.

a) Planning Policy

The final decision on the designation of the new national park will be made around the same time that Cyngor Gwynedd holds its public consultation on the Deposit Plan (Local Development Plan). We need guidance from the Welsh Government / NRW on how Gwynedd's new Local Development Plan should deal with the proposed national park in the area within Gwynedd

Gwynedd's LDP timetable set out in the Delivery Agreement can be found in appendix 1. The schedule is divided into two parts with definitive and indicative steps.

b) Development Management

Guidance is needed on how planning applications are dealt with in the area of the new National Park in Gwynedd. Will Gwynedd Council's Development Management Service maintain this service until the new Local Planning Area (LPA) is established and new staff are appointed? Or will this service be externalised to Gwynedd Council for a fee once the LPA is established?

Finance

More information is needed on how the new National Park will be funded. It is noted that 25% of National Park funding comes from the constituent Local Authorities. In the current financial climate faced by all public bodies, there are significant concerns about the additional burden this will place on the Council during very challenging times financially. Although it affects only a small area of Gwynedd, it is still an important question to ask in the current financial climate facing local authorities today.

Considering the budgetary situation, it is difficult to understand how the work involved in creating a new National Park can be prioritised.

Candidate Area and the need for a new National Park.

The area of Gwynedd considered to be part of the National Park borders the Snowdonia National Park. Was this area considered when determining the boundaries of Eryri? If so, why wasn't it included within the boundary of Eryri National Park? What has changed in terms of the landscape of the candidate area since the designation of Eryri National Park and the Vale of Clwyd and Dee Valley

AONB? There are five National Landscapes in Wales - is there a particular reason for choosing this area over any other?

The Council looks forward to seeing detailed explanations and information that addresses the concerns set out above.

We will be commenting further as part of the forthcoming statutory consultation in October 2025 but in the meantime, we would be grateful if you can give consideration to the issues raised here.

Appendix 1

1) Definitive Stages – Definitive periods when consultations take place

Stage Number	Stage	Timetable	Key Consultation Periods
Definitive			
1	Delivery Agreement - Preparation - Consult with key stakeholders - Submission	September 2023 - March 2024	Public Consultation October October-November 2023 Approval by the Council March 2024 Submit to the Welsh Government March 2024
2	Pre-deposit - prepare, content and consultation - Vision Paper with strategic options - Call for sites Need Specific Background Papers	March 2024 - August 2025	Call for sites March/April 2024 for at least 6 weeks
3	Pre-deposit Consultation Preferred Strategy	March 2024 - August 2025	March 2025 to April 2025

	Impact Assessments SA/SEA and HRA		
4	Deposit Plan	September 2025 - August 2026	Public Consultation December 2025/January 2026

2) Indicative Steps - indicative only to be confirmed later in the process

	Indicative		
5	Submission	September 2026	n/a
6	Examination	11 months of submission (target)	A further consultation may be undertaken following the examination
7	Inspector's Report	August 2027	
8	Adoption	September/October 2027 (must be adopted within 8 weeks of receiving the report)	n/a
9	Monitoring and Review	Ongoing post adoption	Annual Monitoring Reports due October each year and the Plan Review no later than 4 years from adoption date

