

# Key Recommendations

## Landscape Designation Research

### KEY RECOMMENDATION PAPER

#### For the Cambrian Mountains Initiative

By

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# Key Recommendations Paper



1.1 There has been a process of engaging with key partners and stakeholders and in so doing scoping their present policies and strategies in relation to a possible future designation of the Cambrian Mountain Region. In this paper, the pathway to be taken to move towards a recognition for the Cambrian Mountains are identified. It draws on the policy environment and the position of key players who could influence the steps, which taken, could lead to a greater recognition for the Cambrian Mountains. It also sets out key recommendations for further actions towards achieving that goal.

2.1 Partners and stake holders can be viewed within different categories. Those which are national and external to the Cambrian Mountains and those which are internal to the Region. There are two national authorities which will play a key role in future developments. The Welsh Government and Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru. Regular contact and updates should be a priority in both cases. Their work on post Brexit scenarios will be backdrop for their policies going forward. Many agricultural economic and environmental policies are likely to be altered, including replacement of the Common Agricultural Policy(CAP). But in the meantime, there are a number of pieces of new legislation which are of particular relevance to the uplands. The Well -Being of Future Generations (Wales)Act 2015 and Environment (Wales)Act 2016.Both will impact in different ways. Public funding and those in receipt of public funds will need to contribute to the well being goals of economic, social environmental and cultural well-being. The greater scrutiny of how Wales' natural resources are faring through regular State of Natural Resources Reports and more locally based approach to the management of natural resources through Area Statements will also impact on the discussions going forward. It would appear from the response of NRW to the consultation on sustainable management of natural resources that they recognise that it 'timely to consider the need for any new types of designation at this juncture'

2.3In addition to this is the work by the Welsh Government on the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales which took the Marsden report as the starting point and the Consultation on Taking Forward Wales' sustainable Management of Natural Resources. There is in policy terms, a crowded field of play. There has also been a change in Ministerial roles with Hannah Blythyn appointed as Minister for the Environment.

2.4In the meetings with both the NRW and Welsh Government there is a recognition that it is difficult to view a clear strategy and direction for how all is to play out. The report on the consultation will not have been completed before early next year but the Parc Natur model is clearly on the agenda for further discussion. This reflects what was identified in the consultation as 'refreshing the way new areas can be recognised for their special qualities and their sustainable management'. From further discussions after the appointment of the new Minister it would appear that no substantial progress will emerge until the review of the consultation on sustainable management of Natural resources has been completed and considered by Government.

2.5 At this time, it is NRW who have the authority to progress any designation of areas of outstanding natural beauty which would be considered by Welsh Government, who may refuse, vary or confirm the order. Therefore, this is not a route which would seem viable at this stage. There is ongoing work within the Rural Development Division which can be tracked on their Wales Rural network site as it emerges. The round table groups include sub groups focus on [People & Communities](#), [Land Management](#), [Air & Climate](#), [Seas and Coast](#), [Legislation and Regulation](#), [Evidence and Scenarios](#), and [Trade and Supply Chains](#). The Welsh Government are of the view that to 'date, the work of the Roundtable has added significant value, enabling a broad cross-sector approach and well-integrated consideration of the issues. Ongoing engagement through the Roundtable and its Sub-groups of stakeholders will feed into and influence future policy, programmes and the ERA portfolio's continuing discussions with other Welsh Government departments, Defra and wider UK Government'.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The process of engagement should continue with the Welsh Government and Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru. This will allow the initiative to update on the progress of work on the Park Natur proposal and to allow the project to track developments in policy and implementation activities. The initiative should also seek representation on the sub groups of the roundtable of the Rural Development Division.**

**Further work needs to be taken forward to engage with other organisations and individuals who contributed to the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales review**

**3.1** The two farming Unions and the CLA are external stakeholders who have a view on issues which could lead to designation of Landscapes. Discussions with the three organisations on a national level conclude with a similar concern. Generally, designation is not favoured since it implies regulation and planning controls. When the discussions move to the concept of a charter and a focus on brand recognition, there is a greater understanding and support for the development of a community led approach to the designation of areas for the sustainable management of natural resources.

**3.2** NFU, FUW and CLA responded to the Consultation on Taking Forward Wales' sustainable Management of Natural Resources. Closer analysis of their response would suggest that their rejection of the proposal to consider designation along the lines of the Parc Natur model is very much based on the grounds that it is too vague and an informed decision could not be made.

**3.3** But it would be reasonable to note that, 'the FUW have concerns that this approach could stifle economic growth through increasing the influence of minority groups which have little understanding or interest in wider economic, social and cultural factors. Their members expressed concern about who was going to set the "agreed standard" and wanted a fair and standardised model across all designated landscapes'.

**3.4** The NFU in their response share a similar view in that some NFU Cymru members have expressed concern that further designations may undermine the 'specialness' of the existing designated areas and that safeguards need to be incorporated into standards so that designations could not be taken forward without full participation and support of the farming community

3.5 The response of the CLA echoes another concern that there is a need to understand the impact of Brexit on land owners, and any new support structures that might be developed. This would provide a more stable platform upon which to consider any future legislation. In that respect it is important to understand what impact will new agricultural policies have on Wales. The chosen model will have to cope with a range of global challenges which will have a direct impact on the future of agricultural in upland Wales.

3.6 The outcome of meetings and discussions clearly indicated a wish to continue the dialogue and share ideas on future developments. There was a genuine desire to see this taking place not only on a national level but also on a local and county level.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Communication and dialogue should continue with the FUW, NFU and CLA on both a national and local level. Meetings should be arranged on a county and local level to share ideas on the Parc Natur model.**

4.1 The three Local Authorities stride both the external and internal. Their regeneration, tourism and social development plans and actions also are in play which will impact on the progress of any proposal to realise a greater recognition for the Cambrian Mountains. Both Ceredigion and Powys have been pursuing the Growing Mid-Wales Partnership agenda and seeking a Growth Deal for Mid Wales

4.2 The Growing Mid Wales Partnership believes that a regional approach to economic development is vital because of the distinct nature of the economy in Mid Wales. This need also results from what some consider the negative impact the City Region approach has on rural policy. A view expressed in the report RURAL WALES: TIME TO MEET THE CHALLENGE 2025 by Eluned Morgan, Regional Assembly for Mid and West Wales.

4.3 The growth Deal for Mid Wales was given a boost in the recent budget by an announcement by Chancellor Phillip Hamond that a growth deal for Mid Wales is under consideration. This comes after a report from the Assembly's Economy Committee chaired by Russel George A.M which called for mid Wales to have its own growth deal to complete an investment jigsaw across Wales. The UK Industrial Strategy announced last month by the UK government which sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK, makes reference to a Mid Wales Growth Deal.

4.4 These developments clearly set the Mid wales region as a region to be taken forward within the Welsh Government Regional Economic Strategy. A view confirmed in discussions with Ceredigion County Council. This was also reflected in a speech by MarK Drakeford AM Cabinet Secretary for finance at the European Structural Funds Annual Event 2017 in Swansea last week.

4.5 Carmarthenshire County Council is pursuing a different route. While been a part of the Swansea Bay City Region, they have embarked on a review of their rural policy. A cross party group under the Chairmanship of Councillor Cefin Campell is consulting on the rural future priorities of rural Carmarthenshire. In a recent meeting to discuss this work, they recognised that the Cambrian Mountains does not feature in their present plans but are keen to discuss those opportunities.

4.6 There are a number of different work streams which are evolving in respect of Regional Economic strategies which have relevance to the wider designation agenda. These are not only being progressed by the individual Authorities but also by the WLGA. There are opportunities to share the ideas incubating within the Cambrian Mountains Future project and to influence the future structures and management of the uplands. The value and contribution of a Parc Natur in the Cambrian Mountains to the Mid Wales economy and its relevance to the Mid Wales Growth deal needs to be elaborated

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Formal discussions should take place with Growing Mid Wales Partnership on the Cambrian Mountains initiative**

**Further information and evidence should be presented to the Carmarthenshire County Council review of rural policy in seeking their further support for promoting the identity of the Cambrian mountains within their County.**

**Representation should be made to the WLGA in sharing the work of the project with the WLGA RURAL Forum**

5.1 Key to the evolution of this work is the progression of discussion with stakeholders and partners within the Cambrian Mountain Region. The Parc Natur offer needs to be developed with the organisations and communities of the Cambrian Mountains. The broad principles of the offer are within the initial LUC report and the Questions and Answers on the Regional Natural Parks of France documents. The consultation response by the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty also provide some framework for discussions as does the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales report.

5.2 **The work to date and the discussions with external stakeholders indicate a clear awareness of the possibilities of enhancing Cambrian Mountains identity and strengthen the Cambrian mountain brand. The Parc Natur idea has infiltrated the awareness of key authorities, organisations local and national politicians and can be taken forward with some confidence.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION.**

**A comprehensive engagement and discussion should evolve with all the potential partners and stakeholders within the Cambrian Mountains area. The Parc Natur offer should be developed and a lineament of a Parc Natur model needs elaboration**

**The study visit to France should be pursued as a priority alongside the transnational cooperation bid.**

**A one-day conference should be arranged next year to bring together those who share a wish within the Cambrian Mountains to strengthen the future sustainability of their communities.**

**Opportunities to work with other projects which impinge on the Cambrian Mountains should be sought and progressed.**

**END**

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