

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales  
Third Floor, South Core, CO4  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

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 xxxx 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 xxxx 2015:**

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The Stage One report can be accessed online via **[www.tinyurl.com/DLRWales](http://www.tinyurl.com/DLRWales)**