

# Written Statement - Publication of the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

Last updated 29 October 2015

## Carl Sargeant Minister for Natural Resources

Today I have published the report from the Independent Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

In late September last year I commissioned a panel of experts, chaired by Professor Terry Marsden, to appraise and better understand whether the designated landscapes of Wales – our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – have the purposes, management and governance arrangements to meet the significant opportunities, and challenges, we face today and into the future. I want these areas which are valued for their natural beauty to be thriving living landscapes containing vibrant, resilient communities, opportunities for outdoor recreation and rich ecosystems.

I am pleased that the report has sought to reflect the imperatives of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Environment Bill to connect and increase social, economic and environmental benefits from these important areas. The Panel have endorsed my view that a fresh approach to purposes and governance is long overdue, and I agree with their summary that this is necessary to better respond to increasingly complex environmental challenges, inequalities in well-being and health, and to deliver more vibrant rural communities.

The report makes 69 recommendations covering a raft of proposals and observations on purposes, principles, vision, governance models, planning, and funding. The scale and scope of these recommendations is considerable, and further work is now needed to understand their potential benefit and their consequences.

I have asked Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM to lead a Future Landscapes Working Group, involving representatives of the national parks, AONBs, interest groups, business, and local government. The group will explore these recommendations and the case for reform which is aligned to the priorities for public service reform in Wales, and report their findings next year.