

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	12 October 2021
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Wyn Griffith
Contact officer:	Gareth Jones –Assistant Head of Environment Department
Contact Number:	34092
Subject:	DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: THE SLATE LANDSCAPES OF NORTHWEST WALES, WORLD HERITAGE SITE

THE DECISION SOUGHT

That the Cabinet approve the draft Slate Landscapes of Northwest Wales, World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Guidance for a 6 week public consultation, and to delegated the right for the Assistant Head of Department Environment Department to make any non-material modifications, which may be required to the draft SPG to be consulted on.

THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

A six-week public consultation is required to receive input from organisations, developers and members of the public before formally adopting the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Both Gwynedd Council and the Snowdonia National Park Authority are committed to preparing a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance to support their respective Local Development Plans, which contain strategic and development policies as a basis for deciding planning applications. Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPGs) provide further detailed information, in support of the Local Development Plan policies. SPGs should expand and interpret planning policies and not in themselves, form new areas of policy. The draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: The Slate Landscapes of Northwest Wales, World Heritage Site, covers land within both the Gwynedd and Snowdonia National Park Local Planning Authority Areas. The SPG is being presented to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet for approval to release the document for a six week public consultation period (on behalf of the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area). The National Park Planning and Access Committee will be responsible for authorising the consultation on behalf of the National Park. The public consultation will be undertaken jointly for input from organisations, developers and members of the public.

INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. Background

1.2 The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales (WHS) which comprises of six Component Parts was formally added to the UNESCO World Heritage in July 2021. The WHS is considered to represent an exceptional example of an industrial cultural landscape that was profoundly shaped by large-scale slate quarrying and underground mining, and by the working and transport of slate for national and international markets. This industry transformed both the environment and the way of life of those who lived and worked in the mountains of Snowdonia and Gwynedd.

1.2. The six Component Parts are as follows:

- Component Part 1: Penrhyn Slate Quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn
- Component Part 2: Dinorwig Slate Quarry Mountain Landscape
- Component Part 3: Nantlle Valley Slate Quarry Landscape
- Component Part 4: Gorseddau and Prince of Wales Slate Quarries, Railway and Mill
- Component Part 5: Ffestiniog: its Slate Mines and Quarries, 'city of slates' and railway to Porthmadog
- Component Part 6: Bryneglwys Slate Quarry, Abergynolwyn Village and the Tallyllyn Railway

1.3 The majority of the World Heritage Site is primarily located within Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area, with some of the areas also sitting within and adjacent to the Snowdonia National Park boundary.

1.4 Within each Component Part, physical features, which embody the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, have been identified within the Management Plan (see link below)

https://www.llechi.cymru/sites/default/files/Slate_cym_MP_210517p4.pdf

1.5 Each Component Part has its own unique character and were chosen for their scale (all the largest relic quarries and quarrying areas are represented), for their significant landscape impact, for their integrity, and for the way in which they exemplify technology transfer and the transformation of a minority rural culture into a modern industrial society.

1.6 The focus of the SPG is therefore to provide further guidance on any proposals within, adjacent or affecting the setting of the WHS to preserve and where appropriate, enhance the significant features that have been awarded World Heritage Site status by supporting appropriate and sustainable development within and adjacent to the component parts.

1.7 The SPG contains four sections, a summary of which is outlined below:

- (1) **SECTION 1 - Purpose** - explains why the SPG has been produced and how it supports the Local Development Plans.
- (2) **SECTION 2 - The World Heritage Site** - defines WHS and describes the area inscribed for WHS status in Northwest Wales. It states that the area comprises six separate Component Parts or areas and these are shown on maps in Appendix 1 together with further information on the history, Outstanding Universal Value and physical and social attributes of the WHS.

- (3) **SECTION 3 - National and Local Planning Policies** – introduces the planning policy background, which is relevant to guiding new development within the WHS or its essential setting. The relevant local planning policies are shown in Appendix 2.
- (4) **SECTION 4 – Submitting Development Proposals** – gives guidance on which issues are important when developing new proposals and how the information should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Appendix 3 refers to specific types of development proposals that may come forward

1.8 A copy of the draft supplementary planning guidance can be seen in appendix 1 of this report.

2. The process so far

2.1 For over a decade, Gwynedd Council has led on the project to secure the North West Wales Slate Landscape 'World Heritage Site' status to protect and promote the special qualities of these areas for future generations. As the process evolved, it became clear that a policy would be required within both the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan and the Eryri Local Development Plan to protect the slate landscape while the work to secure WHS status continued. As a result of this policies were included to protect and enhance the then 'Candidate World Heritage Site' within their historic environment policies.¹ Since its inscription as a WHS, the protection and enhancement of the designated landscapes continues to be protected by policies within the LDPs.² The SPG provides further detailed information, in support of these Local Development Plan policies.

2.2 Gwynedd Council Planning Policy Officers, and National Park Authority Planning Policy Officers have been working together to prepare the SPG since the summer of 2019 and have received extensive input from key stakeholders. These include the Historic Environment Service and Land and Business Owners.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Following any amendments agreed by the Planning and Access Committee and Gwynedd Council's Cabinet Meeting it is proposed for the Slate Landscapes of Northwest Wales SPG to be subject to a 6-week public consultation. All responses received following this consultation will be included in a report to the Cabinet and SNPA's Planning and Access Committee before recommending formal adoption the SPG as a material planning consideration. The proposed timetable is outlined below:-

SNPA's Planning and Access Committee	20 th October 2021
Conduct a 6 week Consultation	As soon as possible following SNPA's Planning and Access Committee - November – December 2021
Analyse comments and responses	December /January
Following any necessary changes, propose formal adoption of the SPG in a report to Cabinet	Early 2022

¹ ELDP 2016-2031 (Adopted February 6th, 2019): Strategic Policy Ff: Historic Environment
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (Adopted July 31st, 2017): Policy PS20: Preserving and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets

² ELDP 2016-2031 (Adopted February 6th, 2019): Strategic Policy Ff: Historic Environment
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (Adopted July 31st, 2017): Policy AT1: Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites and Registered Historic Landscapes Parks and Gardens

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer: As part of the joint arrangements with Anglesey Council Supplementary Planning Guidance, which relates only to Gwynedd will be considered and adopted by the Cabinet as opposed to the Joint Local Development Plan Joint Committee. The recommendation to undertake a consultation and to do so jointly with the Snowdonia National Park Authority is appropriate.

Chief Finance Officer: Nothing to add to the report from a financial propriety perspective.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft Slate Landscapes of Northwest Wales, World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Guidance