

National Development Framework - Future Wales 2040 and the role of Designated Landscapes.

As Chairman of the Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes¹, I and my colleagues followed with particular interest the debate and reactions in the Senedd to the recently laid version of the National Development Framework - Future Wales 2040.

As you rightly recognised, its focus and detail will be instrumental in guiding the future social and economic prosperity of Wales whilst also strengthening the integrity, resilience and value of the Welsh environment and the diversity of those landscapes which underpin the health and wellbeing of the nation.

With this in mind, I feel compelled to express the Alliance's concern and disappointment with the lack of recognition and ambition for the nation's Protected Landscapes – an area that covers 25% of Wales. Failure to embed the full context and spatial relevance of these landscapes within the draft policy framework is a significant omission. Their mandate, in a national strategic and spatial planning context, is to deliver the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Environment Act 2016, along with their undoubted ability to spearhead the aims of the 'Green Recovery' programme; likewise this has not been explicitly recognised.

In responding to the draft NDF consultation, the Alliance proposed a draft new policy for inclusion on these internationally designated landscapes. We recognise that Future Wales 2040 should not repeat policy text that would be more appropriate to include in the next iteration of Planning Policy Wales. However we maintain that Future Wales 2040 will be flawed if it does not include a specific policy recognising the strategic role of these national assets and endorsing the partnership arrangements for delivery, notably as set out in Welsh Government's 2018 statement of priorities in '*Valued and Resilient*'.

By including such a policy in the NDF and ensuring Natural Resources Wales continues to work ambitiously in partnership with National Park Authorities, AONBs and the voluntary sector, Welsh Government's ambitions can be achieved. It is for this reason I am copying this letter to Sir David Henshaw, Chairman of NRW.

¹ Since 2014, the Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes has championed the status and stewardship role of Wales' Designated Landscapes along with the policy and management challenges they face. It brings together the collective expertise of the Brecon Beacons Park Society, Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Cymdeithas Eryri / Snowdonia Society, Gower Society, CPRW, National Trust Wales, Cymdeithas y Cerddwyr/ Ramblers Wales, RSPB Cymru, YHA Cymru, BMC Cymru and Wildlife Trusts Wales.

Recognising that the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee will soon be scrutinising this latest iteration of Future Wales 2040, I respectfully request the Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes is provided with the opportunity to engage directly with the Committee in the hope that this serious omission is rectified in the final version of this influential document.

I await your earliest response in anticipation of your support for our endeavours.