

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/02000/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

20 September 2022

Dear Jack Sargeant MS,

Thank you for your letter of 6 September 2022 regarding Lorna Brazell's petition to designate the Cambrian Mountains as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Natural Resources Wales is responsible for undertaking the process of designating AONBs and National Parks in Wales, and they are currently examining the case for designating a new National Park in north-east Wales. This is an extensive and exhaustive process and will be the priority for the coming years for NRW in terms of new designations. We also have much to do to improve and empower current designations to contribute more significantly to combatting the nature and climate crises.

Looking further ahead, however, as part of their designation programme during the next 2-3 years, NRW has also committed to undertaking an all-Wales technical assessment of natural beauty. It is intended that this will assess areas against the natural beauty criteria which will help to assess their potential need for future protection. This work will clearly be of interest to those campaigning for AONB status when taken forward.

For designations to be taken forward it is important to demonstrate a level of local support including local political support for designation. Until recently the Cambrian Mountains Society was campaigning for National Park, rather than AONB, status. I am aware that a proposal was made by the Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI), a separate body, that is not seeking a top-down statutory designation but instead maps out an alternative grass-roots approach. A question remains to the extent campaigners have secured local support and aligned different, sometimes conflicting, approaches to protection.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am happy for officials, together with NRW officers, to meet Lorna to discuss some aspects of the proposal to designate in greater detail. I will follow these discussions closely.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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