

P-04-378 Extend the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the Gower Society's proposal for the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to be extended is expedited, given that the request has been with the CCW for consideration since 2005 and the fact that, as of December 2011, the CCW is no longer considering such proposals due to the potential establishment of a new Single Environment Body for Wales.

Petition raised by: The Gower Society

Date petition first considered by Committee: 13 March 2012

Number of signatures: 1 (from an organisation)

Supporting information: On 1 March 2005, The Gower Society (one of the oldest and largest local amenity groups in Wales) wrote to the Countryside Council for Wales requesting it to consider extending the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to areas in the north east of the Gower peninsula, parts of the Loughor Estuary and Loughor Conservation Area, and much of the upland area of Mawr.

The response of the Chief Executive of CCW (29.03.05) was that CCW was working with Denbighshire County Council "to work up a process that will inform any decisions on whether a tract of land should be put forward as a proposal for AONB designation. It is intended that the resultant process will be entirely transferable to any other areas in Wales." He went on to say: "It is likely that this pilot will be completed by March 2006".

A series of correspondence has followed this initial exchange and several meetings have taken place at National Assembly offices between representatives of The Gower Society and CCW, arranged by – and usually in the presence of – Edwina Hart, Assembly Member for Gower.

Two meetings were held with Ms Jane Davidson when she was Minister with responsibility for the environment, and on 18.07.11, representatives of The Gower Society met Mr John Griffiths, Minister for (inter alia) the Environment.

At each of these three meetings the proposed AONB extension was discussed.

The City and County of Swansea's policy is to support such an extension and Mawr Community Council (the area most largely affected by the proposal) has expressed its full support.

After the Clwyddian Range and Dee Valley designation Order was confirmed by the Minister on 22.11.11, we wrote to CCW again, urging them now to move forward with our 2005 proposal for the Gower AONB. The Chief Executive's reply noted the Welsh Government's approval of the case for establishing a Single Environment Body for Wales. "Given these momentous changes", he continued "we will be focussing our efforts in the next 18 months in working... to ensure a smooth transition from CCW to the SEB". Therefore "We are not in a position to consider any further proposal for boundary changes or new designations".

By then, it will have been over eight years since our proposal was first put to CCW. In our view, this length of delay is unreasonable, and we call upon the National Assembly for Wales to expedite this process.