



Cymdeithas Eryri
Snowdonia Society

LG 19

Bil Llywodraeth Leol ac Eiriogaadau (Cymru)

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Eryri

Response from: Snowdonia Society

30th December 2019

Email to: SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

Evidence submitted by Cymdeithas Eryri the Snowdonia Society to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee inquiry on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.

1. The Snowdonia Society is the conservation charity which for over 50 years has contributed to the work of caring for and protecting Snowdonia. The Society's activities cover the whole of Snowdonia National Park but extend beyond its boundaries where appropriate. The Society's purpose is to protect and enhance the beauty and special qualities of Snowdonia and to promote their enjoyment in the interests of all who live in, work in or visit the area both now and in the future.
2. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. Our comments relate to those parts of the Bill which we believe are of particular relevance to National Parks.

Part 5 – Collaborative Working by Principal Councils.

3. We believe failure to include National Park Authorities in the list of organisations to be consulted before the setting up of corporate joint committees is a serious omission. National Park Authorities are the local planning authority for their area and can use their planning policies to influence land, transport and economic development. They therefore have a strong and legitimate interest in potential areas for which it is proposed that joint committees can be established. For this reason we contend that National Park Authorities must be consulted at the outset when joint committees are being planned in their area.

4. If the Bill is not amended to address this issue, there is a risk that the particular needs and interests of National Parks will not be taken into account in the plans for collaborative working between Councils, thus putting at risk the significant benefits that National Parks provide and making it difficult for National Park Authorities to perform their duties effectively.
5. While the legislation allows for other bodies to be consulted if “considered appropriate”, we believe that National Park Authorities should be statutory consultees to avoid any risk that they would not be consulted. They should therefore be added to the lists of organisations to be consulted as set out in Sections 76 and 78 of the Bill. Furthermore, we also believe that if a joint committee is established which includes an area designated as a National Park, then the relevant National Park Authority should be a statutory consultee for the proposals which these joint committees are to be developed and clarification should be provided in the Bill that any such proposals must not impact on the statutory functions of the National Park Authority.

Part 7 – Mergers and Restructuring of Principal Areas

6. We welcome the fact that National Park Authorities are listed in section 121 as one of the organisations that principal authorities must consult before making merger applications. That they are listed here adds weight to the argument that Park Authorities must be consulted when principal councils are proposing to set up joint committees.

Part 9 – Miscellaneous

7. We welcome the measures set out in section 165 which mean that the improvement regime set out in Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 will no longer apply to National Park Authorities. This regime was very onerous on small authorities such as the National Parks, demanding a disproportionate amount of their limited resources to be allocated to auditing and reporting.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation process.

David Archer
Trustee Cymdeithas Eryri Snowdonia Society