

Agenda

Title of meeting:	NRW Public Board Meeting
Date of meeting:	Monday 12th January 2026
Time of meeting:	15:10 – 16:40
Location:	Teams

Time	Item
15:10 (5 mins)	<p>Item 1. Open Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Declaration of Interests • Explain conduct of meeting <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest.</p>
15:15 (75 mins)	<p>Item 2. National Park Decision</p> <p>Sponsor: Dom Driver, Interim Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting Presenter: Keith Davies, Principal Advisor, Protected Landscapes; Ash Pearce, Team Leader, Designated Landscapes Programmes</p> <p>Summary: To APPROVE the recommendation in relation to the designation of the proposed new National Park.</p> <p>Paper ref: 26-01-B01</p>
16:30 (10 mins)	<p>Item 3. IDD Budget Decision</p> <p>Sponsor: Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services Presenter: Pete Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee</p> <p>Summary: To APPROVE the IDD Budget</p>

Paper ref: 26-01-B02

16:40

Close Public Meeting

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 th December 2025
Title of Paper:	Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2026
Paper Reference:	26-01-B01
Paper sponsored by:	Dominic Driver, Executive Director, National Operations
Paper prepared by:	Keith Davies, Principal advisor on Designated Landscapes; Ash Pearce, Programme Manager; Richard Sumner, Lead Specialist Advisor
Paper presented by:	Keith Davies, Ash Pearce, Richard Sumner
Purpose of the paper	Decision
Summary	<p>We have completed the consultation on a proposed National Park (Designation) Order including the 5 local authority statutory consultees, representative organisations and the public. We received 1678 responses, 66% were supportive of the Designation Order, 32% were against and 2% uncertain. 3 of the local authority consultees objected and the other 2 stated they were unable to support the Designation Order.</p> <p>We have assessed the evidence and opinions provided against the statutory tests of (in summary) natural beauty and opportunities for open-air recreation.</p> <p>In conclusion – we are satisfied that the evidence collated demonstrates the landscapes included within the proposed Glyndŵr National Park meet the statutory requirement for designation. We therefore do not intend to make any changes to the proposed boundary.</p> <p>The responses received covered a range of factors beyond the statutory tests. These were not material to our consideration but we have reported on them for transparency and to provide full information to Welsh Government to inform their decision.</p>

Overall, we assess that we should make the Designation Order in relation to Glyndŵr National Park.
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Background

1. We in Natural Resources Wales (NRW) form the statutory designating body responsible for considering which areas meet the statutory criteria for designation of National Parks and National Landscapes. The Welsh Government commissioned us to evaluate the case for a new National Park based on the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape. We have done this under our statutory powers and duties as the designating body via a published formal process, Procedural Guidance GN010. An area of land can only be designated as a National Park if it appears that the evidence demonstrates that the statutory designation criteria, as set out in legislation, are met.
2. At its meeting on 16 July 2025 the Board received a report on the public consultation on a Candidate Boundary held in 2024 together with the evidence in relation to natural beauty and outdoor recreation and a range of supporting evidence. Following discussion, the Board approved the recommendation to proceed with the statutory consultation on the proposed Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2025.
3. The material presented on 16 July is not replicated in this report but is available to the Board and public [here](#) and will form part of the package to be sent to the Minister after the notification period if the board decides to make the designation Order (in this context making means the order being signed and sealed).

Statutory Consultation on a Proposed Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2025

4. The statutory consultation on the proposed Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2025 commenced on 15 September 2025 and closed on 8 December 2025.
5. We received coverage from the BBC in both languages, Global radio and a range of the national and regional press together with technical publications such as Farmers Weekly. We organised in-person and on-line consultation events, public meetings in Llangynog and Gwaenesgor together with meetings with the Local Authorities as statutory consultees and a range of sectoral stakeholders (Annex 1).
6. A total of 1065 people attended our events and we received 1678 responses.

Review of Responses to the Statutory Consultation

7. The relevant considerations for us in respect of whether to designate a National Park are as set out in section 5, of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (the 1949 Act), hereafter referred to as the statutory tests, they are:
 - Natural beauty.

- Opportunities the area affords for open-air recreation, having regard both to its character and position in relation to centres of population.
 - Whether it is especially desirable that necessary measures are taken to:
 - conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area specified; and
 - promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.
8. We have considered all representations, objections and comments submitted to us against the designation criteria. Whilst a number of detailed responses were received in relation to the proposed boundary, many raised wider issues that did not relate directly to the statutory tests required to justify the designation order.
9. These wider considerations will be included in the Integrated Impact Assessment that will inform a Welsh Government decision to confirm, amend or refuse the Designation Order. For this reason, we have provided information on the responses received even though many were not related to the criteria to which we must limit our considerations. We also provide the information to be transparent, reflecting the “engaging with the public” and “working together” principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.

Analysis of statutory consultee response

10. Local authorities are the sole statutory consultee in relation to the designation of National Parks. The response from these bodies is therefore critical in terms of our consideration and review of the response to statutory consultation. The position of each Local Authority is set out below:
- Flintshire-not able to support pending further detail.
 - Denbighshire-rejects the proposal pending further detail.
 - Powys-objection.
 - Gwynedd-objection.
 - Wrexham-objection.
11. The Local Authorities raised common themes relating to uncertainty about future funding and resourcing of services, governance, planning arrangements, infrastructure and visitor management, housing affordability and impact on the Welsh language.
12. Denbighshire considered that Welsh Government should delay a decision on the designation until after the Senedd elections in May 2026 when there may be greater clarity and certainty around resources.
13. Powys County Council raised challenges to our evaluation of Natural Beauty and Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation. We are satisfied that the points raised by Powys do not materially alter our evaluation and evidence on these or how areas that meet the statutory criteria have been drawn together within a coherent area for National Park designation. Our response is set out in Annex 2.

14. If there are objections from a statutory local authority which are not withdrawn prior to submission of an Order for confirmation, Welsh Ministers must hold a local public inquiry.
15. Although not statutory local authorities, the following town or community councils have objected: Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, Llanfair Cereinion, Ceiriog Uchaf, Llandderfel, Cilcain, Llandrillo, Llangollen and Tremeirchion, Cwm and Waen.
16. Nannerch and Coedpoeth were supportive subject to boundary amendments.

Representative Organisations

17. We received responses from a range of representative organisations:
 - a. The farming and land use sector raised concerns with the National Farmers Union, CLA, Farmers Union of Wales and Confederation of Forest Industries, for example, submitting objections.
 - b. The environment sector in general was supportive, including the National Trust, the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape, Council for National Parks, Cymdeithas Eryri, and the RSPB. The North Wales Wildlife Trust supported in principle whilst recommending a boundary change.
 - c. The National Landscape Association objected raising issues in relation to the evidence on evaluation and assessment and consideration of alternative management mechanisms. Our response is set out in Annex 2.
 - d. The tourism and recreation sector were generally supportive with the Open Spaces Society and a number of Ramblers Groups supporting. The Oswestry Ramblers requested changes to the boundary. The Flintshire Local Access Forum were supportive. The Powys Local Access Forum objected.
 - e. Minerals sector stakeholders, including the Minerals Product Association, the North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party, Tarmac and Carter Jones for example, generally objected. This was based on perceived restrictions arising from a National Park.
 - f. The renewable energy sector raised similar concerns in relation to perceived restrictions. Responders included, for example Renewables UK Cymru, Bute Energy and Savilles on behalf of Galileo.
 - g. Mentrau Iaith Cymru supported the proposal in principle subject to implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

Individuals

18. Many individuals raised issues similar to those from local authorities including uncertainty over governance and funding, planning and infrastructure, farming and land management, recreation and visitor numbers housing, impact on the Welsh language, together with detailed comments on the proposed boundary.

19. Shortly before the consultation closed, we were passed physical copies of 1017 responses to a separate survey undertaken by two Wrexham County Council councillors. We have acknowledged receipt of these and taken note of the numbers and content of their survey, the majority of which objected to the proposal. However, the questions posed were different to our consultation and we have no knowledge of the process or methodology used. As a result, we are not able to merge these responses with our analysis of the statutory consultation responses. No GDPR statement was provided with the submission and us holding this data without the appropriate compliance measures would place us in breach of data protection requirements. For this reason, we returned the documents to the originators.

The Extent of Overall Support for the Proposal

20. Our analysis demonstrates that of the 1678 responses received 66% were in support in principle or subject to changes to the boundary whilst 32% were opposed and 2% uncertain.
21. We welcome this level of engagement and will provide the overall analysis to Welsh Government when we submit our recommendation, whatever that is. However, our statutory duty in respect of whether or not to make a Designation Order limits us to consideration only on the basis of the quality of the evidence presented in relation to the designation criteria as set out above and not the weight of submissions relating to wider issues or particular opinions. This entails an analysis in terms of:

Natural Beauty and Opportunities for Outdoor-Recreation

22. The majority of the responses from the statutory consultees have not questioned the evidence relating to the designation criteria. Powys County Council raised challenges, as explained above. Responses from organisations representing sectoral interests, for example Renewables UK Cymru, the Minerals Products Association and the North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party, together with submissions from individual developers or their representatives, Galileo, Bute energy, RWE and Tarmac for example, provided submissions challenging the boundary. Submissions supporting the National Park in principle but requesting amendments to the boundary were received from Montgomery against Pylons and the Dee Valley Environment Network for example. The environment and recreation sector were supportive with organisations such as Coed Cadw, the North Wales Wildlife Trust and Oswestry Ramblers requesting amendments to the boundary.
23. Individual respondents submitted a range of comments highlighting aspects of the area's natural beauty and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Some drew attention to the area already containing both these elements.
24. Overall, having taken the consultation responses into account and the other forms of evidence already considered, we are satisfied that the proposed Glyndŵr National Park area meets the natural beauty and outdoor recreation criteria.

An analysis in relation to desirability

25. The evidence demonstrates that there is an extensive tract of land that meets the natural beauty and outdoor recreation criteria and is of such national significance that National Park purposes should apply to it. The evidence collated during the designation process including the Special Qualities report, Forces for Change report and response to the periods of public engagement and consultation identifies a range of issues and pressures that currently, or may in the future, present a threat to the special qualities of the landscape. The Management Options report concluded that the management mechanisms, powers and duties which come with a statutory National Park offer the most robust mechanism for effective long-term management of current and future issues over and above current arrangements.
26. There was a disparity of opinion between respondents on the potential role of a National Park and a National Park Authority. The statutory consultees, representative bodies, developers and some members of the public raised concerns in relation to, for example, implications relating to funding, resourcing, planning, farming and land use, visitor management and infrastructure, housing affordability and implications for the Welsh Language. Responses from bodies representing environmental, recreation and heritage interests were supportive recognising potential benefits for nature, climate adaptation, improved countryside access and visitor management.
27. Overall, having taken these into account, and the relevant considerations for us, we are satisfied that it is desirable to designate the proposed area as a National Park.

An analysis in relation to the proposed boundary

28. Several consultation comment themes emerged in relation to the proposed boundary.

Changes to the boundary to include additional areas

Comments were raised by individuals, members of the community and councillors with particular interest in their local area and include:

- Fields adjacent to Gronant and Talacre Dunes
- The potential remnants of Offa's Dyke (Aberwheeler valley)
- Ysceifiog Valley (Aberwheeler valley)
- Halkyn Mountain
- Park in the Past, Caergwrle Castle and Ffridd Valley (Hope Mountain)
- Vale of Clwyd
- Clocaenog Forest
- Clywedog Valley (Coedpoeth)
- Fields at Chirk Aqueduct
- Mynydd Mynyllod
- The Upper Dee Valley, Llandrillo and Rug Estate
- The Tanat Valley
- The Cain, Vyrnwy, Banwy and Meifod Valleys

29. Our response: We have carefully considered all submissions, carried out a detailed review of the evidence submitted, reviewed this against the designation criteria and in

the case of larger sites evaluated this in the field. Our detailed responses are set out in Annex 2.

30. In conclusion – we are satisfied that the evidence collated demonstrates the landscapes included within the proposed Glyndŵr National Park meet the statutory requirement for designation. We therefore do not propose to amend the proposed boundary.

Challenges to the assessment, evidence and in turn the landscapes included for designation

31. Comments were raised by Powys County Council and Gwynedd County Council, the National Landscape Association, representative groups such as the Minerals Product Association, Renewables UK Cymru, individual developers - Tarmac and representatives of landowners within the area – Haven Leisure Limited and Nantclywd Estate.
32. Our response: we are satisfied that the points raised by Powys and Gwynedd as statutory consultees, or representative groups, individual developers and the representatives of estates within the area, do not materially alter our evaluation and evidence of Natural Beauty and Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation or how areas that meet the statutory criteria have been drawn together within a coherent area for National Park designation. Our detailed responses are set out in Annex 2.

Changes to the boundary to protect landscape from development

33. Comments came from local action groups such as the Dee Valley Environmental Network and Montgomery against Pylons.
34. Our response: the fact landscapes are at risk of development, is not something which designation can be used to address as there is no scope to consider factors outside the statutory tests. Our detailed responses are set out in Annex 2.
35. Overall, having taken the consultation responses into account, we are satisfied that the proposed boundary delineates an appropriate and justifiable boundary for a Glyndŵr National Park.

Conclusion

36. We are satisfied that it is desirable to make a Designation Order in the proposed terms in relation to a Glyndŵr National Park.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

37. Failing to deliver a clear, well evidenced recommendation on a Designation Order within this Senedd term would mean an element of Strategic Risk (SR) 8, Strategic Delivery Failure, materialising. That we have reached this stage means we have largely managed this risk. A decision that goes beyond consideration of the statutory tests would create risks for SR8 and SR7 Regulatory Failure.

38. That we should limit our consideration to the statutory tests tends to elevate “SR4: Collaboration and Advocacy Failures: the risk that NRW carries out insufficient or ineffective collaboration and advocacy with key external stakeholders leading to a fragmented approach or non-delivery of strategic objectives and purpose”. Stakeholders may perceive that we have not listened to their feedback about matters not relevant to the statutory tests. This is made more acute because of the forthcoming Senedd elections, which tends to elevate inherent risks in this area. We are mitigating this risk via transparency and the effort we have put into maintaining high quality relationships with our stakeholders.

Wider implications

39. Implications on wider aspects are:

- a. **Well-being Objectives:** We have sought to manage our interactions in a way that strengthens relationships so that achievement of our Wellbeing Objectives in the area would be as far as possible enhanced whether or not a new National Park is created.
- b. **Finance and Resource Implications:** Should a local public inquiry be called, we would need resources to support our involvement. If designation proceeds, we will need further funding in future years to support WG during the establishment phase. Funding for Programme costs was confirmed for 2025/26 at £700,000. WG have indicated that a similar budget will be available for 2026-27.
- c. **Equality:** The designation process has been informed by an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (available on request together with the other impact assessments).
- d. **Data Protection:** data has been protected during the consultation process.

Next Steps

40. If the Board agrees to the recommendation, the order will then be made (in this context making means the order will be signed and sealed) we would then publish the formal statutory Notices in a number of specified publications and make copies of the order and maps available in the locality, prior to submission of the ‘made’ Order to Welsh Ministers for confirmation. The Notification period would run from 16 January to 13 February 2026 during which period statutory consultees, representative organisations and the public could object to and/or make representations on the Order.
41. On completion of the Notification period, we would submit the Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2026 to Welsh Ministers for confirmation together with any representations or objections, any wider representations and the evidence collated throughout the designation process.
42. A designation Order once made cannot come into operation unless or until confirmed by the Welsh Ministers.

43. If no representations or objections are made, or any made are withdrawn, then the Minister may, if they think fit, confirm the Order with or without modifications.
44. If a local authority objects and does not withdraw its objection the Minister must call a local public inquiry. In all other cases the Minister has discretion to decide whether or not to call a local public inquiry or to give objectors some other opportunity to make representations.
45. If an inquiry is held, once the Minister has had the opportunity to consider the Inquiry report the Minister may then decide whether or not to confirm the Order and whether to make any changes to it.
46. If confirmed, at the same time the Designation Order was confirmed the Designation Orders for the current National Landscape would be revoked and a transition period to enable the National Park Authority to be established and the relevant powers to be transferred from the affected Local Authorities to be transferred to it, would begin

Recommendation

47. Our assessments and the outcome of the consultation process have led us to recommend that the NRW Board make the Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2026 under legal powers provided by and, in accordance with the procedures set out in the 1949 Act and, if made publish the formal statutory Notices in specified publications and make the order and map available for inspection in the locality, prior to submission of the `made` Order to Welsh Ministers for confirmation.

Index of Annexes:

Annex 1 – Consultation events and meetings

Annex 2-Analysis Report (to follow).

Approval / Consultation process

Approval/consultation process Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	The paper has been developed by Keith Davies, Ash Pearce and Richard Sumner with legal input provided by Browne Jacobson.
Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	The NRW Board

<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Ruth Jenkins / Rhian Jardine, Senior Responsible Officer</p> <p>Dominic Driver, Executive Director, Evidence, Policy and Permitting</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be given further information about the work?</p>	<p>Executive Team</p>

Annex 1**Statutory Consultation on a proposed Glyndwr National Park(Designation)Order 2025-Consultation Events and Meetings****Consultation Events**

Date	Time	Location	Target audience	Type of event
Monday 22 September	6pm – 7.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Elected Members (MSs, MPs)	Meeting
Wednesday 24 September	6pm – 7.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Elected Members (Cllrs, Community Cllrs)	Meeting
Wednesday 1st October	4pm - 7pm	Coleg Cambria - Llysfasi	Landowners	Drop-in
Thursday 2 October	4pm – 7pm	Canolfan Ni Corwen	Public	Drop-in
Wednesday 8 October	6pm – 7.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Local Organisations and Businesses	Meeting
Tuesday 14 October	2pm – 5pm	Llangynog Memorial Hall	Public	Drop-in
Tuesday 14 October	6.30pm – 8pm	Llangynog Memorial Hall	Public	Meeting
Wednesday 15 October	4pm – 7pm	Canolfan Ceiriog Centre	Public	Drop-in
Wednesday 22 October	2pm – 5pm	Gwaenysgor Village Hall, Gwaenysgor, Rhyl LL18 6EP	Public	Drop-in
Wednesday 22 October	6.30pm – 8pm	Gwaenysgor Village Hall, Gwaenysgor, Rhyl LL18 6EP	Public	Meeting
Tuesday 4 November	3pm – 4.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Energy Sector	Meeting
Wednesday 19 November	6pm – 7.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Public	Meeting
Wednesday 26 November	3pm – 4.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Environmental Groups	Meeting
Thursday 27 November	3pm – 4.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Tourism, Recreation and Access	Meeting
Tuesday 2 December	6pm – 7.30pm	Microsoft Teams	Public	Meeting

An additional in person drop-in event was organised in Llangollen Town Hall on November 18th, 4pm-7pm.

Meetings

September

- 17th Flintshire County Council members.
Land Use Consultants on behalf of Galileo
- 18th NFU, FUW, CLA
- 22nd Denbighshire County Council members
On-line event. Elected members (MPs and SMs)
- 23rd CNP Senedd event
- 24th On-line Events. Elected Members (Local Authorities and Community Councils)

October

- 1st Landowner Event- Coleg Llysfasi Ruthin.
- 2nd Public Drop-in event Corwen
- 3rd Wrexham Cabinet Lead briefing
- 8th On-line event. Local Organisations and Businesses
- 9th Cyngor Gwynedd local member briefing
- 14th Llangynog Public Drop-in event and Public Meeting
- 15th Public Drop-in event Glyn Ceiriog
- 17th Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Partnership
- 22nd Public Drop-in event and Public Meeting Gwaenesgor
- 28th Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes
- 30th Wrexham member workshop

November

- 3rd Powys member workshop
- 4th National Access Forum Wales
- 4th On-line event-Energy Sector
- 5th Trydan Gwyrdd
- 6th NRW/WEL Forum
- 18th Public Drop-in event Llangollen
- 19th On-line Public Event
- 21st Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Joint Committee
- 25th On-line event. Environment Sector
- 27th On-line event. Tourism, Recreation and Access
- 28th Special meeting of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Partnership

December

- 2nd On-line Public Event
- 8th Close of Consultation

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	12 th January 2026
Title of Paper:	Internal Drainage Districts – Precepts, Rates & Levies 2026/27
Paper Reference:	26-01-B02
Paper sponsored by:	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services
Paper prepared by:	Pepe Sepulveda, Business Accountant
Paper presented by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	<p>The Board is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the Internal Drainage District (IDD) special levies, drainage rates, and precepts for 2026/27. • authorise its common seal to be affixed to the approved drainage rates. • delegate the Board's responsibility for approving annual statements for 2025/26 to Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services

Background

1. The Board are requested to approve the recommendations following the meeting held with the Chair of Flood Risk Management Committee considering the IDD's special levies, drainage rates and precepts for 2026/27 on 17 December 2025.
2. The Board has previously agreed to delegate detailed consideration of matters relating to IDDs to the Flood Risk Management Committee.
3. All funding recommendations have been discussed with the various IDD Advisory Groups.

Assessment

4. The Flood Risk Management Committee (with its delegated responsibility) held an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday 17th December at which it considered and agreed the proposed IDD precepts, drainage rates and special levies for 2026/27 and recommend that the Board approve.
5. In summary the proposals are to:
 - Increase precepts to £340k (£14k increase on 2025/26 rates), and
 - Increase special levies to £1.54m and drainage rates to £240k (£73k increase on 2025/26 rates, in line with inflation).
6. Should members of NRW Board require a copy of the Flood Risk Management Committee Paper on the IDD funding proposals for 2026/27, please contact secretariat.

Risks, Risk Appetite, and opportunities

7. If the precepts, drainage rates and special levies are not approved then we will not meet the statutory deadlines, and the programme of works will not be authorised.

Wider implications

- (a) **Finance:** The paper is about the financial position of the IDDs. There will be minor advertising costs involved in communicating the drainage rates agreed in the local area.
- (b) **Equality:** Equality Impact assessment is not required.

Next Steps

8. Timelines:
 - Drainage rates published on NRW internet - within 10-days of Board approval (by 26 January 2026).
 - Sealed schedules of special levies posted to Local Authorities by 14 February 2026.

Recommendation

9. The Board is requested to:
 - Approve the IDD special levies, drainage rates and precepts for 2026/27,
 - Authorise its common seal to be affixed to the approved drainage rates,
 - Delegate the Board's responsibility for approving annual statements for 2025/26 to Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services