



INQUIRY INTO PREPARATIONS FOR REPLACING EU FUNDING FOR WALES

The three National Park Authorities of Wales work in partnership as National Parks Wales (NPW) promoting the purposes and interests of the three National Parks, Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia.

The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for the National Parks:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage;
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the Public

When National Parks carry out these purposes, they also have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the National Parks.

NPW welcomes this opportunity to provide comments on the consultation. Whilst NPW may not have significant direct experience in the mechanics of EU funding streams and their administration, the territories of the three Parks have been influenced in both a negative and a positive manner by EU policy and funding support.

There have been some significant benefits over the last decades from EU support in National Parks e.g. the evolution of the Wales Coastal Path, a new building on the summit of Snowdon, improvements in recreation and tourist facilities, projects that delivered on biodiversity and sustainable land use. All these projects have contributed in maintaining what makes National Parks special and have contributed to the economy of our areas and the wellbeing of our communities.

PLANNING FOR REPLACING FUNDING STREAMS:

The Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for BREXIT has established a task group for such consideration, and we support the principle of establishing such a group. From our experience and involvement, intelligence provided allows stakeholders to fathom the extent of potential change, which is valuable when considering scenarios in relation to level of funding and administrative responsibility. NPW is disappointed that there have been no opportunity to engage on the land management group, arguably the most important group to areas such as National Parks, where the experience and knowledge of the three organisations would add value. The extent of funding or potential funding issues are identified and they inform discussions within Wales and on an UK level between the devolved administrations.



BRECON BEACONS
NATIONAL PARK



Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro
Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park



PARC CENEDLAETHOL
ERYRI
SNOWDONIA
NATIONAL PARK



PARCIAU NATIONAL
CENEDLAETHOL PARKS

Parciau Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog, Arfordir Penfro ac Eryri yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth.
Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia National Parks Working in Partnership

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ADMINISTRATING REPLACEMENTS FOR CURRENT EU FUNDING STREAMS:

NPW like all stakeholders have reservations in relation to future proposals, their structures and administration and the extent as to how such changes affect National Parks' purposes, in a post BREXIT scenario.

NPW draw your attention to the following:

- Post BREXIT – need for regulatory arrangements to be in place both in terms of environmental and consumer protection.
- What will the regulatory floor look like for industry and land based sectors?
- Current delivery of axis 3 & 4 activity, are aligned to Local Authority administrative boundaries – we believe there are more effective arrangements centred on places and destinations to deliver on such matters.
- As a matter of principle, Welsh Government should devolve administration and delivery to regional or local based hubs, outcomes can be strengthened by such an approach and would underpin the five ways of working and contribute to outcomes as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- Delivery of land based support mechanisms should align with strategic outcomes such as Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, Sustainable Development and where appropriate language and culture outcomes. The Cabinet Secretary has confirmed that a one-size fits all approach will not apply in Wales, based on this we believe that place plans similar to National Park Management Plans should be a blueprint for setting future priorities, support regimes and their administration.
- There is a need to allow for transitional arrangements for all current EU funded programmes.
- Advising on how best to deliver for Wales (and how to administer), is difficult as quantifying any budgets post 2024 is difficult. Will budgets be hypothecated and if not how will Welsh Government re-purpose (if at all) such resources. This is vital as current EU programmes have benefited from 7 year funded programmes, which allows for more strategic approaches in the what and how on how to deliver for Wales. Short-term financial allocations would be particularly problematic in addressing environmental and social factors.
- In terms of land based environmental management there needs to be understanding of what are public goods and what are public benefits and clear justification on any interventions will be required.



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