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Wales**

Wales's New National Park Proposal 2024 Public Consultation Report

Report No: 926

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List of Abbreviations

1. NRW - Natural Resources Wales

1. Executive summary

This report has been written by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) with impartial analysis undertaken by Resource for Change. It details the analysis and findings of a 10-week public consultation held from October to December 2024 on the developing proposal to designate a new National Park in the area of and including the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

The 2024 public consultation aimed to consult stakeholders and the public on the proposed draft boundary, referred to as the Candidate Area Map, **not** a final boundary.

There was a good level of engagement throughout the public consultation. The 19 public consultation events (drop-in and online) ran by NRW attracted nearly 700 people, and over 1,960 written responses were received (1,911 questionnaires, 58 emails). Local voices were well represented, making up the majority of attendees and responses.

Key findings included:

- Strong public recognition of the qualifying criteria of a National Park:
 - 89% of respondents agreed the area possesses natural beauty and 67% agreed that the area has opportunities for open air recreation. While this does not necessarily translate into support for designation of a National Park, these are the core qualifying criterion for National Park status.
- A narrow majority of respondents were in support of designating a new National Park.
 - 52% of respondents said that the area should be a National Park (42% yes, 10% yes but with modifications to the boundary, 44% said No, 4% Don't know)
- The top public concerns:
 - The issues and themes raised by respondents reflects a broad spectrum of public sentiment, from enthusiastic support, to caution, to strong opposition. The content of the responses were broadly similar to those expressed at the early public engagement period in 2023, although there was a slight change in the order of importance and most to least frequently mentioned. The top three themes in 2024 were:
 1. Wildlife, Agriculture, land management, Environment & Sustainability
 2. Landscape conservation, recognition for the area and tranquillity
 3. Questioning the necessity for change, management and controls, costs, funding and bureaucracy
 - Whereas in 2023 they were:
 1. Landscape conservation, recognition for the area, and tranquillity
 2. Wildlife, agriculture and land management, environment and sustainability
 3. Tourism, public services, and infrastructure

NRW is currently undertaking analysis to explore all of the themes raised. The feedback from this public consultation has informed the following:

- A benefits for Nature Report

- An Economic Assessment
- A review of planning
- A Health Impact Assessment
- A Welsh Language Impact Assessment
- An Equalities impact assessment

NRW is also reviewing feedback from the public consultation alongside ongoing stakeholder engagement feedback and reviewing evidence relating to the boundary and the management options analysis.

NRW will first present the findings to its Board in summer 2025. The Board will decide if a National Park, other designation or no designation at all is most desirable. If a designation is approved, then a statutory consultation will take place. A detailed map and all supporting evidence will be shared with the public in the autumn/winter of 2025.

2. Introduction

In its Programme for Government (2021-2026), Welsh Government set out its commitment to designate a new National Park for Wales.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is Welsh Government's statutory adviser on landscape and natural beauty and the designating authority for any new National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Welsh Government has commissioned NRW to evaluate the case for a new National Park based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

NRW is an independent organisation and will make an independent recommendation based on the evidence gathered and implications for the citizens of Wales. The statutory process and tests will be applied.

NRW currently has a team leading the assessment evaluating the case for a new National Park in Wales. Work includes undertaking data and evidence gathering, and engagement with local communities and other key stakeholders.

Between Monday 9 October and Monday 27 November 2023, NRW ran a 7-week early engagement period which consisted of online and drop-in events offered to the public and targeted stakeholders. This was intended to build understanding of the local issues and considerations.

Following the 2023 engagement period, and a subsequent period of evidence gathering, the 2024 public consultation focused on consulting the public on the emerging proposal.

NRW ran a 10-week public consultation from Monday 7 October until Monday 16 December 2024 on the draft boundary map, referred to as the Candidate Area Map.

During the public consultation, NRW held a total of 19 online and drop-in events which attracted almost 700 people.

In total, there were 1,968 responses to the public consultation across all avenues of submission (online, email and postal). 1,911 questionnaires were submitted and 58 emailed responses were received.

NRW contracted an external body, Resources for Change consultancy, to carefully analyse and thematically code all the feedback and this can be seen in *Section 4* of the report.

3. How NRW consulted with stakeholders and the public

During the 10-week public consultation, NRW held 19 events in total. There were 10 public drop-in events, two public online events, and seven targeted stakeholder events. Of the seven stakeholder events, six were online events and one was a drop-in. The six online events were targeted toward; elected members, recreation and access groups, environment and heritage groups, renewable energy sector, utilities, businesses and tourism. The drop-in event was targeted towards those within the agricultural sector and landowners.

All of the events were advertised on the project website and open to the wider public. People were told they only needed to attend one event, be that online or drop-in as the information shared was the same at each. All of the events were an opportunity to learn more about the proposal and evidence gathered to date, ask questions of the team and share feedback on the draft boundary map, referred to as the Candidate Area Map.

Drop-in Events

The 10 drop-in events were held at:

- Parkfields Community Centre
- Ceiriog Centre
- Llanrhaeadr Village Hall
- Loggerheads Country Park
- Wrexham Memorial Hall
- Public Institute Committee
- Kings Hall Community Centre
- COWSHACC Centre (1st Clives Own Welshpool Scout Headquarters & Community Centre)
- Canolfan Ni Corwen
- Llangollen Town Hall

The targeted agricultural sector and landowners stakeholder drop-in event was held at Llysfasi College. Events were held on weekdays (between 1pm-7pm and 3pm-7pm) and Saturdays (between 10am-4pm). People were encouraged to attend the drop-in events as they wished and, that there was no need to book.

Attendees at the events were counted on arrival, asked to sign in, and handed bilingual printed copies of the public consultation leaflet, event evaluation form, and questionnaire. They were encouraged to view the information boards, reports, photographs, pop-up banners, and large maps showing the Candidate Area Map.

Multiple staff were on hand, always with some Welsh speakers available, and easily identifiable in NRW branded clothing. Staff discussed the proposals, explained the Candidate Area Map, and

engaged in general discussions with attendees to understand their perspectives, answer their questions where possible, and encourage the completion of questionnaires as a mechanism for capturing feedback.

There were 575 attendees in total across the 10 drop-in events and the targeted agricultural sector and landowners stakeholder drop-in event.

Online Events

Those interested in participating in one of the online events were encouraged to email the project team with details of the event they were interested in attending. The project team sent out meeting links ahead of the events. Each event was scheduled for 90 minutes and followed a structure of 30-minute presentations and 1 hour for questions and discussion. All the online events were bilingual with simultaneous translation provided. At the end of the events, people were encouraged to provide their feedback by completing the questionnaire.

There were 113 attendees in total across all nine online events.

Public Meetings

NRW accepted invitations to two public meetings organised by community councils in the southern part of the Candidate Area. These took place in Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant and Llanarmon Ceiriog. It should be emphasised that these were not NRW organised meetings. They served as an important expression of the strength of feeling and level of concern felt by many in the community.

4. Public consultation findings - Resources for Change

All 1,968 public consultation responses have been carefully analysed, thematically coded and the findings presented in the following section of the report by an external body, Resources for Change consultancy.

Resources for Change is a socially responsible, employee-owned consultancy with a significant reputation for innovation in involving people in the matters that affect their lives. As a company, Resources for Change originated in 1997 in the field of environmental management and today they still link their expertise in this area with work which integrates people and their environment. Resources for Change carries out both quantitative and qualitative research and includes fieldwork – gathering ‘live’ data which may be used to inform plans and strategies.

To find out more information about them please follow the link <https://r4c.org.uk/>



4.1 Questionnaire responses

QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1 – ABOUT YOUR FEEDBACK

QUESTION 1:

ARE YOU RESPONDING TO THIS CONSULTATION AS:

- AN INDIVIDUAL?
- ON BEHALF OF AND ORGANISATION?
- ON BEHALF OF A GROUP OR COMMUNITY?

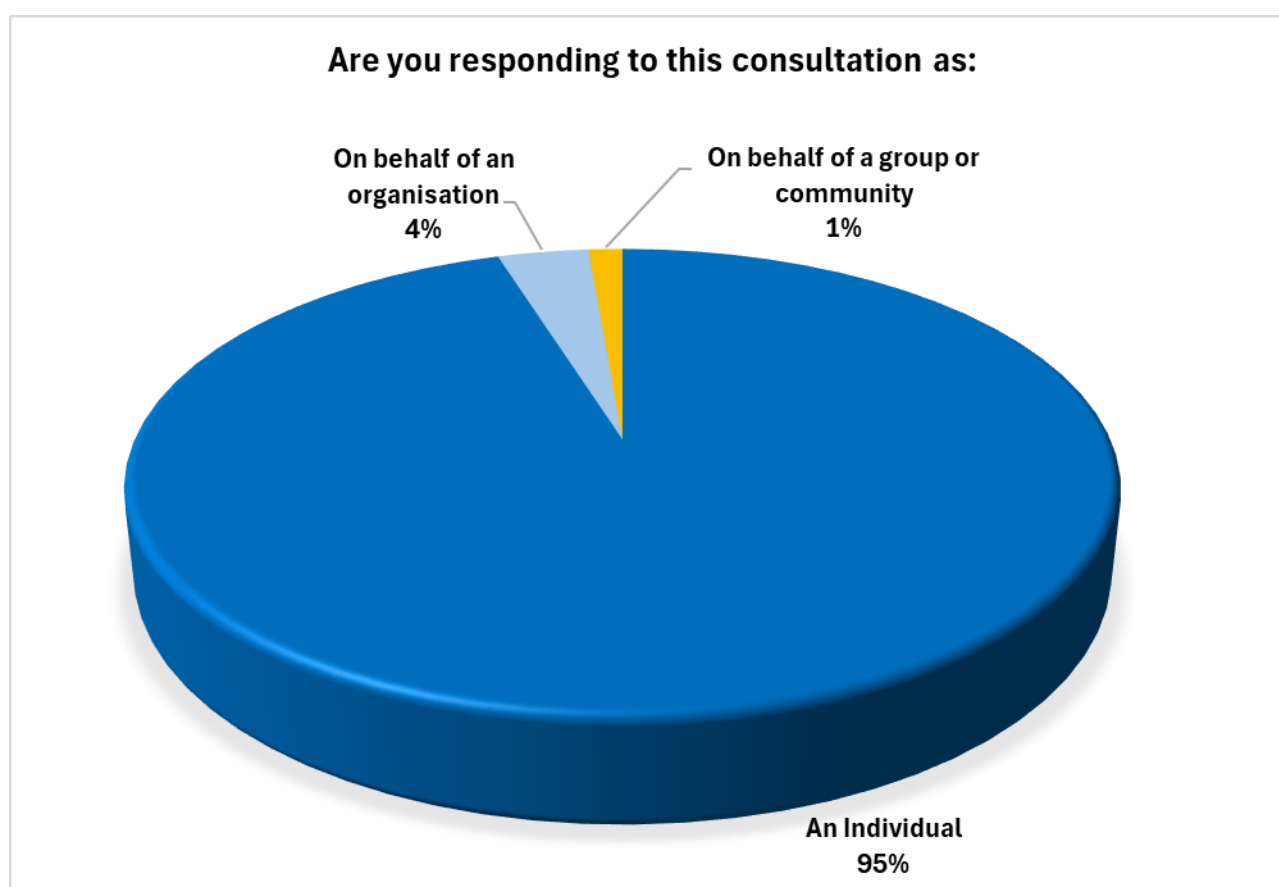


Figure 1: How respondents identified when responding to the questionnaire

Out of 1,911 responses to the questionnaire; 94.4% (1,803 respondents) responded as an individual, 3.5% (67 respondents) responded on behalf of an organisation, 1.3% (25 respondents) on behalf of a group or community.

99 respondents specified which organisation, group or community they were responding on behalf of. These were from 69 respondents within the environmental and agricultural sectors and 30 groups and communities.

QUESTION 2:

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU?

- A LOCAL RESIDENT
- A VISITOR / TOURIST
- A FARMER / LANDOWNER
- A BUSINESS OWNER
- AN ORGANISATION / GROUP REPRESENTATIVE
- OTHER

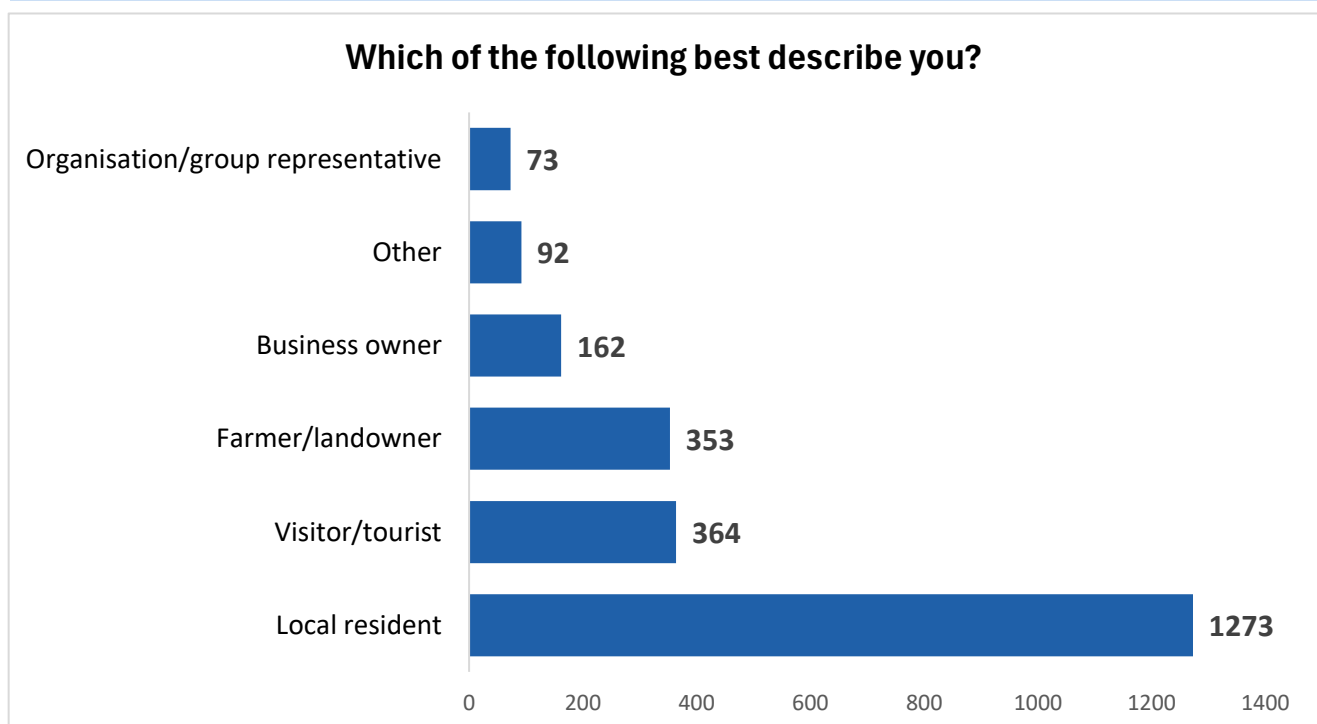


Figure 2: How respondents described themselves

Respondents to this question were able to tick as many answers as applied to them. 1,273 described themselves as local residents, 364 as visitors/tourists, 353 as farmers/landowners, 162 as business owners, 92 as other and 73 as organisation/group representative.

Respondents who identified as two (or more) overlapped on the following; 211 respondents said they were both a 'local resident' and a 'farmer / landowner', 5 said they were a 'local resident' and a 'visitor / tourist', and 127 said they were a 'local resident' and a 'business owner'.

The 92 respondents who selected 'Other' included some who identified as being resident in Wales, former residents of Wales and of the candidate area, people who worked within the environmental sector or were interested in the environment, farmers and land owners, members of local authorities and individuals who come from outside of Wales.

The respondents were asked 'what role they were within the organisation they represented'. Responses included that the respondents were organisation chairs, directors, secretaries, managers, policy officers, trustees, councillors and council clerks to name a few.

Respondents were given the chance to add 'Any further comments' related to the categorisation they had selected. 259 respondents commented within the part of the question. The responses included explanations of how they were related to the area, their views about the proposed new National Parks and the work of their organisation, to name a few.

Within the views expressed about the proposed new National Parks within this response, many showed concern about the National Parks or the process, others explained why they supported the proposal.

QUESTION 3:

WHAT IS YOUR POSTCODE?

WHAT IS YOUR POSTCODE?

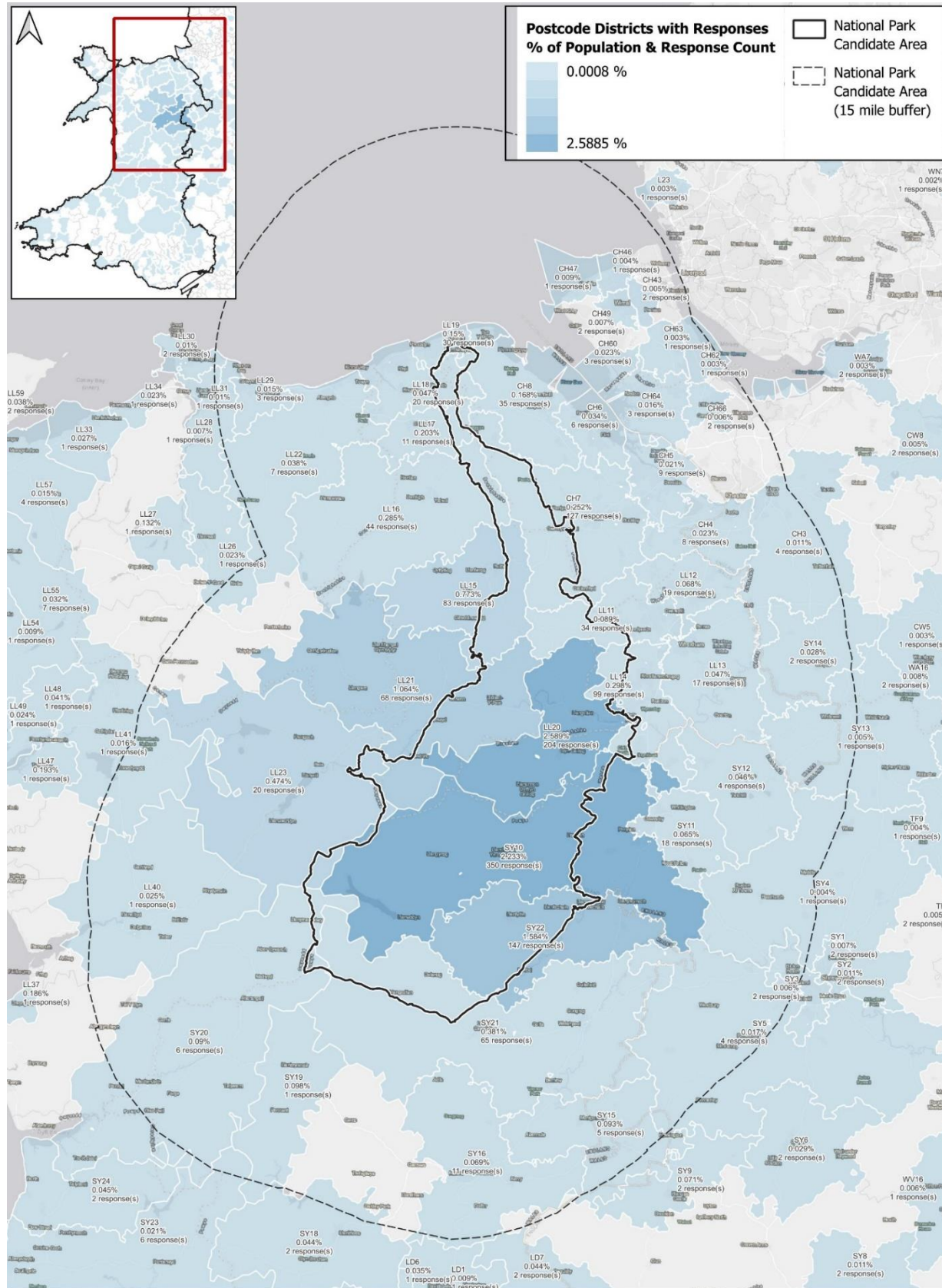


Figure 3: Map of public consultation responses by postcode

Whilst responses were received from all across Britain, from the north-west of Scotland and Northern Ireland, to Kent, Portsmouth and Plymouth, the majority were received from Wales, and more specifically from in and around the new National Park's proposed draft boundary.

Llandudno Postcode areas (LL), which cover the centre and north-west of the proposed draft boundary, saw the largest number of responses, with 698 responses received, or 37.3% of the responses received which identified a postcode. Shrewsbury (SY), which cover the south of the proposed draft boundary, was the next largest, with 638 responses, or 34.1% of the responses received which identified a postcode. Chester (CH), which covers the north-east of the proposed draft boundary received 205 responses, or 11.0% of the responses received which identified a post code.

1,541 (82.4%) of the responses received came from post code areas covered by the National Park's proposed draft boundary.

The map above shows the number of responses from the postcode districts, for instance, from the postcode district SY10, 350 responses were received, while 20 responses were received from the LL18 postcode district. (Areas within the map with no colour or data in them signify that no responses were received from this postcode.)

The percentages shown on the map are calculated from the number of responses received in that postcode district compared to the total population (from the 2021 census) within the postcode district. For example, within the SY10 postcode district, 350 responses were received from a population of 15,672, giving a percentage of 2.23%.

Please note, in some areas there may be a higher level of responses than others due to a higher population of residents. For example, SY10 has a population of 15,672 compared to a population of 1,018 living within the SY19 postcode district. Also, this question was not compulsory and so as many as 43 respondents did not provide their postcode at all. Four provided the first three digits and 1,864 provided their postcode in full.

QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2 – THE 2023 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PERIOD

QUESTION 3A:

DURING OUR ENGAGEMENT PERIOD IN 2023, A NUMBER OF KEY THEMES WERE IDENTIFIED.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT THEMES?:

- LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION, RECOGNITION FOR THE AREA, TRANQUILLITY
- WILDLIFE, AGRICULTURE AND LAND MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
- MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM, PUBLIC SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- QUESTIONING THE NECESSITY FOR CHANGE, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLS, COSTS, FUNDING, BUREAUCRACY
- LOCAL PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES, LOCAL ECONOMY
- ACCESS ISSUES & OUTDOOR RECREATION
- HOUSING IMPLICATIONS
- CULTURE AND HERITAGE
- PLANNING IMPLICATIONS
- BOUNDARY LOCATION

During our engagement period in 2023, a number of key themes were identified. In your opinion, which are the most important themes?

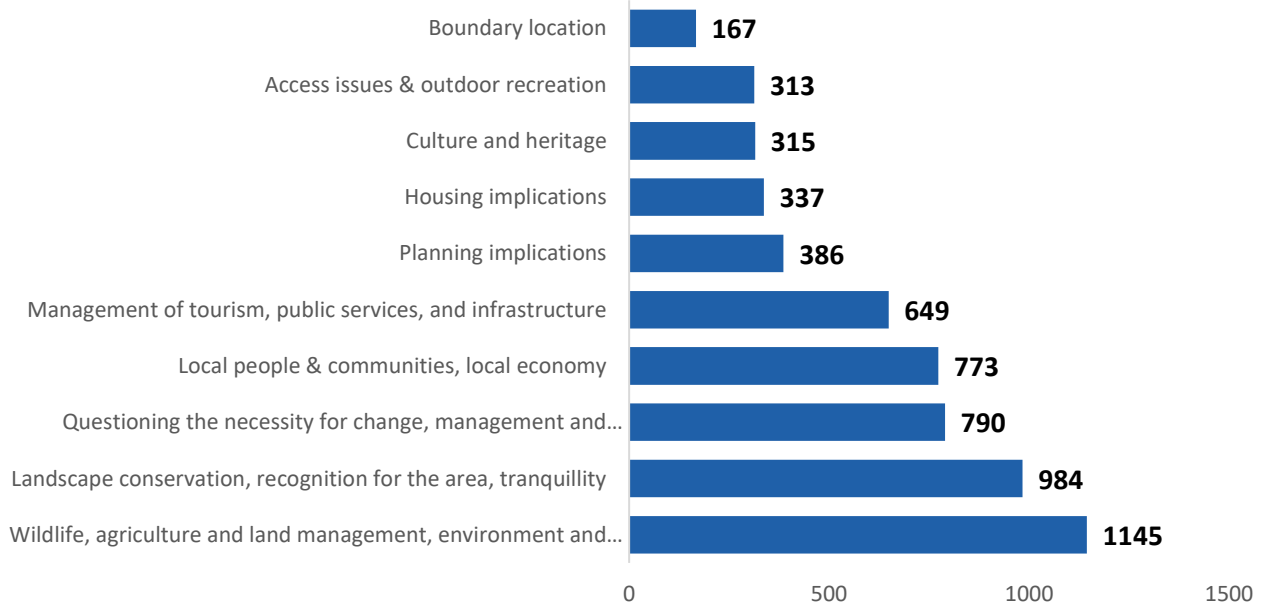


Figure 4: Respondents top three most important themes from the 2023 engagement period

Following on from the 2023 engagement period, the responses were carefully considered, and the key findings and themes identified, and presented in an engagement report. As a part of the 2024

public consultation, Question 3a asked respondents to identify which three of the 2023 engagement period themes were, in their opinion, the most important themes.

Out of the 1,911 respondents to the questionnaire, the top three most important themes from the 2023 engagement period ranked by respondents were:

1. Wildlife, agriculture and land management, environment and sustainability (1,145 votes)
2. Landscape conservation, recognition for the area, and tranquillity (984 votes)
3. Questioning the necessity for change, management and controls, costs, funding, and bureaucracy (790 votes)

This was closely followed by local people and communities, local economy (773 votes), management of tourism, public services, and infrastructure (649 votes), planning implications (386 votes), housing implications (337 votes), culture and heritage (315 votes), access issues and outdoor recreation (313 votes), and boundary location (167 votes).

The top three most important themes mentioned above are slightly different to the top three most frequently mentioned themes in the 2023 public engagement report, which were ranked as follows:

1. Landscape conservation, recognition for the area, and tranquillity
2. Wildlife, agriculture and land management, environment and sustainability
3. Tourism, public services, and infrastructure

Whilst landscape conservation, recognition for the area, and tranquillity, and Wildlife, agriculture and land management, environment and sustainability remain high, in the 2024 public consultation the themes of questioning the necessity for change, management and controls, costs, funding and bureaucracy came through stronger than tourism, public services and infrastructure.

QUESTION 3B:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUGGEST ANY OTHER THEMES OR ADD ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

The respondents were given the opportunity to suggest any other key themes they felt should be added to the ones identified in the 2023 engagement period. There were no new emerging themes, only comments and feedback that built on the already established themes. Respondents were also asked to add any additional information they felt should be added to the original themes.

There were 553 responses to Question 3b which covered a range of topics, predominantly related to the previously identified themes. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

WILDLIFE, AGRICULTURE AND LAND MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

152 out of 553 respondents (almost 27.5%), touched on the theme of 'Wildlife, Agriculture and Land Management, Environment and Sustainability'. Respondents commented on the unique wildlife and biodiversity, and how designation could affect it, both positively and negatively. Many respondents commented on the impact agriculture has had in the past and could have in the future, and how the land managers have shaped the landscape. Others commented on the impact a National Park may have on the environment. Comments were also made about how the

environment, biodiversity, infrastructure and tourism can be managed sustainably if the area became a National Park.

- **WILDLIFE**

Respondents commented on wildlife, ranging from concerns about the present state of wildlife within the area, how to protect established wildlife and introduce or encourage new species to enhance the area, and how to increase wildlife diversity. Many questioned how to maintain or improve a balance between wildlife and agriculture, and what impact an increase in tourism may have on the area's wildlife. Several respondents commented on the impact a National Park could have on wildlife, such as *"if a new National Park could put biodiversity and nature recovery as its main focus, this would be my main reason for supporting it"*. Others emphasised this further stating that *"the only legitimate reason to instate a National Park" would in fact be "if it actively and meaningfully protects and enhances wildlife and addresses the ecological crisis"*. Many felt the present land managers should be incentivised or left to protect and enhance wildlife, commenting *"the protection of landscape and wildlife should be addressed by a generous SFS for nature friendly farmers"*. Emphasis was placed on the fact it is *"vital to engage farmers in work towards improving sustainability and biodiversity as they are custodians of the land"*. Questions were raised about how a National Park would protect the area, with some saying, *"studies show protected areas do not always protect wildlife and fauna in fact the opposite"*. Others however felt *"the proposed National Park offers hope for enhancing and restoring nature and carbon sequestration at scale - particularly if the Sustainable Farming Scheme can be made to work"*.

- **AGRICULTURE**

The majority emphasised the *"economic activity is predominantly around agriculture"* within the Candidate Area and so, raised concerns about the impact of tourism on the agricultural sector, touching on issues like *"parking in passing places/in front of farmer's gate/on people's private drives; leaving gates open; dogs off leads; livestock worrying; littering the area (human and animal); often rude and abusive"*. Others felt farmers and landowners are already the custodians of the land and the ones who have shaped it to the point where it is believed to have outstanding natural beauty and so leaving *"the farmers to try to get on with the job of feeding us"* would be best. Respondents commented *"we don't need this"*, *"the area is perfect as it is" and being a National Park "will not improve things for the people who live here"*. There were also minor concerns raised about the conflict between agriculture and the environment, with comments such as *"wildlife and environmental sustainability won't be helped by promoting current agriculture practices"*.

Views of the farming community covered were both sides of the discussion about a proposed new National Park, some were positive *"as a resident of 4 years and a new entrant farmer in the area I am excited about the prospect of a National Park"* and others negative *"leave our countryside alone!"*.

- **LAND MANAGEMENT**

The key aspect responded to was who looks after the land, both in the past and present. Many felt land managers (in particular farmers) of the area to date have created a beautiful landscape and so *"it should be left to the farmers to continue what they are doing and have been doing for many years"*. Some questioned *"what is the countryside for?" and "what is our long-term vision for farming and the environment?"* with many others going on to say, *"what we need is a nationwide approach to best managing countryside?"*. This was a view that was repeated often, along with providing help and support to the land management community to balance nature with agriculture.

For example, *“the landscape has the potential to be both farmed well and to benefit nature equally with the appropriate support”*. The issue of conflict of priorities between nature and farming was expressed repeatedly, with comments such as *“Welsh Government has declared a nature and climate emergency. The proposed National Park offers hope for enhancing and restoring nature and carbon sequestration at scale - particularly if the Sustainable Farming Scheme can be made to work”*.

- **ENVIRONMENT**

The key comment made was that the first priority of the new National Park should be the protection of the environment and wildlife. Questions were raised about the impact a National Park could have on the environment, with an increase in tourism, concerns about infrastructure and access to the land resulting in impacts on habitats and species. Comments were made about the Ceiriog Valley, that *“the environment and wildlife are thriving here but an increase in visitors would threaten that”*. Respondents again felt that the wildlife, agriculture and the environment are already *“relatively well managed with a few exceptions”*, and raised concerns that the creation of a National Park might *“throw this out of balance”* and would *“probably cause more damage”*. The majority of responses related to the environment were positive, expressing a hope that the designation of a new National Park would enhance and restore nature.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**

Responses related to sustainability were generally aimed at sustainable land management. This was talked about as being a priority, key to the future, and should be one of the things a new National Park should support. Many believed that *“the time is now to act to give nature, the very thing which sustains us, all the help it can get”*. Others were concerned about a potential increase in tourism, which they felt would not be sustainable for the area unless well managed. Respondents also highlighted the sustainability of local communities and the local economy, feeling that a National Park could impact (some positively and some negatively) communities within and near to the area. Emphasis was placed on the fact *“it must at all times be approached in a way which ensures the sustainability of local communities and the local economy”*. Some expanded on this *“the designation of a National Park can support sustainable rural economies by promoting local products and businesses”*. Sustainable transport was also commented on, for example *“Sustainable transport, due the importance of creating a National Park which is fit for the future and accessible for as many people as possible”*.

MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM, PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

145 (almost 26.2%) out of the 553 respondents commented on the theme of ‘Management of tourism, public services and infrastructure’. Most respondents raised concerns about infrastructure such as local roads and traffic parking, bins and litter, and the erosion of paths. Respondents also commented on public services, including emergency services, visitor information, public transport, and planning. Comments related to tourism included number of visitors, behaviours and the effect on the local economy.

- **LOCAL ROADS AND TRAFFIC**

Almost all of the comments about local roads and the amount of traffic were negative. Concerns raised were about the present condition of the local roads and the effect a potential increase of traffic could have on them, the size of the roads and road network, as well as visitors’ ability to cope with small, often single track roads, and a possible impact on the local community to go about their daily business if there is an increase in traffic. Many felt the *“roads in this area are narrow and*

congested in the summer now without adding more traffic on to them!" and were concerned about "how traffic can be managed in Llanrhaeadr / Lake Vyrnwy as we see know that the area is chaotic during weekends and holiday times which can cause gridlock, and that is without it being in a National Park".

- **PARKING**

Concerns were raised about the lack of parking within the National Park's proposed draft boundary, and what effect illegal parking has on the local community, as well as other tourists. Respondents questioned how an increase of parking needs could be managed and catered for. This parking issue was raised for both the rural areas, where there is almost no designated parking at present leading to anti-social or illegal parking, as well as urban areas, both villages and towns within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Many respondents emphasised that *"there is no space in the village for more parking"*. Others raised safety issues in relation to parking, for instance *"parking spaces in Llanrhaeadr are at a premium which is a safety issue and the Llanrhaeadr waterfall road is already a safety issue as single carriageway with ambulances struggling to get to patients already"*.

- **LITTER**

Litter in all of its forms was commented upon by respondents from general waste, through to dog waste, to a lack of public toilets leading to human waste being left in the area. Respondents questioned who would clear it up and what damage it could do to the environment and wildlife. Some commented that *"the surrounding area is naturally beautiful, however present visitors don't always seem to appreciate it as they throw fast food litter, used nappies, tobacco products etc out of their car windows"*. There were concerns that even more tourism could mean *"even more litter and disturbance of natural habitat"*. Some felt that if the proposed draft boundary became a National Park, it would require substantial investment in visitor management stating that *"the existing National Parks are currently underfunded and are struggling with over tourism with negative effects on littering and erosion to land"*.

- **FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS**

Respondents who referred to footpaths and bridleways within the area commented on the present condition of the footpaths, their accessibility, maintenance, gates and stiles, as well as what impact a potential increase in tourism may have on them. Several felt *"some of the footpaths in North Wales are in a dreadful state including totally blocked and will need additional commitment and funding in the future"*. Others commented that footpaths cross fields with livestock in them and on the potential impact this could have. A few respondents were hopeful that a National Park could be a good thing for the paths within the area, feeling that they would be improved and used more. Some believe the creation of a new National Park would *"encourage more people to use and appreciate our great outdoors" which would "improve their health and improve the condition of footpaths and bridlepaths"*. Emphasis on the need for accessibility within the proposed new National Park, *"expand the bridleways and paths throughout the Dee valley making fully accessible trails for all"*.

- **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Respondents touched on Mountain Rescue, emphasised that the Police and Ambulance Services are already *"stretched to breaking point"* and questioned how they could cope with an increase in tourism. Many were concerned about how emergency services could travel to incidents if the road network became busier, expressing that certain areas are already experiencing gridlock during

holiday periods. For example, *“single track roads full of cars, blocking access for emergency vehicles”*. Some respondents felt there would be a need for increased funding to help the emergency services. Others were concerned about the lack of local hospitals in the potential designation area and how local hospitals, A & E services, Mountain Rescue and the Air Ambulance service would cope with any potential increase in demand. For example, *“the increase in tourists is likely to result in an increase in injuries, however we don’t have the support of Mountain Rescue resulting in an increased strain on our already over stretched emergency services”*.

- **VISITOR SERVICES AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

Given that some centres elsewhere in Wales are losing retail and catering services, concerns were raised about how visitor centres across the National Park’s proposed draft boundary would be funded, and what more could be done to meet the need of potential increased tourism. Emphasis was placed that *“funding is most important as there is not enough money to keep visitor centres open as it is”*. Respondents were also concerned about the lack of public toilets within the potential National Park area, commenting that *“the respective councils are effectively bankrupt, and are closing facilities such as public toilets”*. Others were concerned about visitors as *“the existing toilet facilities are already insufficient, additional tourism would make this far worse”*.

- **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Respondents commented on the lack of public transport at present and the potential for an increase in public transport if demand grew due to an increase in tourism. Emphasis was placed on the need for *“active transport”* across the area to be developed, hopefully allowing for a reduction in cars and a benefit to physical health. Improvements in public transport and active transport were seen to have a positive impact on both the visitors and local community. Most respondents referred to sustainable transport when talking about public transport; commenting that *“the availability of sustainable transport is a key element affecting how people access the area, and in particular young people who are more likely to rely on buses and trains”*. Some also felt that public sustainable transport could help to reduce any potential issues of traffic within the area.

- **PLANNING**

Planning was identified as a key theme that *“runs through all of this - what is possible, where it is possible, and how to ensure appropriate infrastructure in the first place”*. Concerns were raised about how the planning process could become more difficult with the introduction of another layer of bureaucracy. Some felt a change to the planning process and extra scrutiny could hinder businesses such as farming businesses from *“developing”* and *“moving with the times”*. Others felt a change in the planning authority could be a *“good thing”* for the area and that *“planning constraints would also have to be increased to prevent additional destruction of the environment”*, echoed by, amongst others, *“planning needs to be tighter to protect the area”*.

- **MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM**

Some respondents saw a *“benefit”* to the area, the community and the local economy, whilst others felt an increase in tourism could be a *“disaster”*. Other concerns were to do with questioning whether there is *“sufficient accommodation available”* within the area, the extent to which tourists contribute to the local economy. Conversely, some were concerned about too many tourists, *“swamping local businesses”*, traffic control and *“speeding”*, as well as the cost of putting tourist services and management measures in place. Some benefits respondents noted included a potential increase in local economy from tourist spend and job creation, to react to any increase in demand.

QUESTIONING THE NECESSITY FOR CHANGE, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLS, COSTS, FUNDING, BUREAUCRACY

145 (almost 26.2%) out of the 553 respondents commented on the theme of 'Questioning the necessity for change, management and controls, costs, funding, bureaucracy'. There were comparatively few responses related to the necessity for change, management and controls and bureaucracy, in contrast to the numbers of responses related to costs and funding.

• NECESSITY FOR CHANGE

Respondents looked at different forms of change, from considering how a National Park would change the controls and policies already in place with the local authorities, what changes in planning controls may be brought in, and any impact from changes to permitted development. Respondents also questioned the need to change a system of land management which has been in place for generations, as well as it being human nature to be suspicious of change. Some commented that *"sometimes it's the case that we prefer to keep things unchanged because of fear of the unknown. Reassurance could be the key to this"*. Many respondents asked, *"what are the benefits of having this as a National Park?"*. Others accept that change happens and that the population must work with it, stating *"change is an inevitable part of life"* and going on to say *"the only way to gain a little control over what happens is to take charge, to be progressive and active about it"*. Some were concerned that *"it's not that the local residents don't want change; they are not being offered the right change!"*.

• MANAGEMENT

Respondents commented on the management of tourism, land management, local authorities, management plans and sustainability management. Some questioned how management would be implemented, how much any new management might cost, and what support might be expected from new styles and layers of management. The responses were both positive and negative, some expressing suspicion of new layers of management, others feeling new management could bring new opportunities. For example, *"when funded and delivered well, a National Park is an opportunity for bringing multiple benefits and vibrancy to all sectors of society"*. Others were concerned about the lack of clarity about future management saying, *"I fear the implications this park will have on the expectations on changes to how the family farm THEIR OWN LAND."*

CONTROLS

Respondents questioned how a National Park might impact the control of bureaucracy, control of planning, control of development, as well as what input the local population may have over the control of any new designation. Some felt *"a National Park, with a well-developed planning and environmental strategy and properly structured local stakeholder input has got to be the way forward to protect our unique and precious area"*. Others felt the area already had sufficient controls; noting *"the area is beautiful already with sufficient protection controls in place"*.

• BUREAUCRACY

Respondents questioned how bureaucracy might be implemented within a new authority, what interaction there would be between a new authority and the original authorities, how this new layer of bureaucracy would be funded and what powers it may have. Others questioned if another layer of bureaucracy was needed, for instance, *"unnecessary funding another layer of bureaucracy"*.

Emphasis was placed on the concern for an “extra level of bureaucracy - needs less not more”. Respondents also expressed concern that “the bureaucracy outlined in the documents for this consultation is overwhelming”.

- **COSTS AND FUNDING**

Most respondents questioned how the new National Park could be afforded when Welsh Government and local authorities are already having a funding crisis. Others referred to the numerous funding cuts already being made by Government and NRW. Some asked where the funds to cover the costs will be coming from and what impact those costs may have on other services, or other Parks. Concerns were raised that the country is already in a “*cost of living’ crisis*” and would this lead to a “*tax increase to cover the costs*”. Comments were also made that if funds were spent on this project, what result might that have on spending for other projects or services, for example “*it will cost a fortune which could be better spent elsewhere and have no positives for any of us that I can see*”. Others felt that whilst a new National Park would require significant funding to establish and run, they questioned if there would be any ongoing income for the park, “*it will cost millions to organise and millions to manage and will not generate any kind of income*”. Although, the converse view was expressed by those who felt a National Park could produce an uplift on the local economy. Some felt there would be a “*local economy boost and emphasis on the wellbeing of all our people regardless of race, class and background*”.

LOCAL PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES, LOCAL ECONOMY

107 (almost 19.4%) out of the 553 respondents commented on the impact a National Park could have on local people, communities, and the local economy. Comments included thoughts about how a National Park could impact on young people, housing and jobs, local businesses to do with farming and tourism. Also how it may change the tourist economy and how the local economy may develop, both with and without the ‘green economy’ and major ‘green’ developments, and whether this would perhaps result in any high paid / high skilled job opportunities.

- **IMPACT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Some respondents expressed grave concerns of what would be the “*destruction of functioning local communities, tranquillity of the environment and wildlife diversity by overtourism*”. Also concerns that “*life will be more challenging given additional visitors, traffic on the roads*”. Some felt positive about the impact of a new National Park on local communities, as it “*would be the best way to safeguard the character of the area and protect it for the benefit of local people and of the wider community*”. Respondents expressed a desire for the local community to have an “*active*” and “*strong*” voice in the running of a National Park. Concern was expressed that there may be a “*lack of decision making from local community once National Park status is awarded*”. While others felt “*National Parks offer volunteering opportunities and foster community engagement. This can lead to increased community involvement in conservation efforts and local development projects*”.

- **IMPACT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Respondents commented on the impact on the local economy. These comments ranged from how tourism may affect the local economy, if there may be a change in house prices following a National Park designation and what potential impact this could have on the economy, and whether a National Park may push the economic balance more towards tourism. Some were concerned that a National Park could have a negative effect on the local economy, whilst others felt it would have a positive effect. Some felt it was “*a fantastic idea*” which would “*boost local economies, businesses and job opportunities for the local communities, many of whom are reliant on tourism*”.

Others commented from personal experience *“3 times a year I will book holidays in Snowdon or Pembrokeshire which helps with local employment and the rural economy in general”*.

- **IMPACT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON YOUNG PEOPLE**

The main impact respondents felt related to young people concerned about house prices, how a National Park could cause house prices to increase, thereby pricing young people out of the housing market in their local community. Respondents felt *“many young local people are already priced out of being able to afford to buy in the area they grew up in”* with many saying they *“wish to stay and contribute to the local economy”*. There were concerns that *“this situation could worsen if it was to become a National Park”*. The rationale being *“house prices tend to rise in National Parks”* and *“young people will find housing even less affordable”* other concerns were that if the young people were moving away there could be *“a loss to 'heritage' let alone folk bred understanding the land and farming”*.

- **IMPACT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON HOUSING**

Respondents felt the impact of housing price increases may not just affect the young, but rather all who live in the potential new designation, as well as a buffer around the area around the potential new National Park. Of the responses which referenced housing and not young people, the views appear to be both positive and negative, with some respondents noting that increases in house pricing could have positive effects on local communities and economies. Some felt this could be mitigated with affordable housing, comments *“local people need affordable local housing so this should be prioritised”*. While *“this part of the valley is a bastion of Welsh language and culture, and its inhabitants would benefit enormously from National Park level funding of tourism infrastructure; supporting rural skills; increasing affordable housing”*.

- **IMPACT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON FARMING BUSINESSES**

Farming businesses were concerned about potential restriction changes in the planning framework within any new National Park; commenting that the *“experience in other National Parks (such as the Peak District) demonstrates that farmers are unable to invest in modern farming infrastructure”*. Others called for farming businesses to be protected within any new designation; *“Protection for farmers and businesses alike”*. Respondents were also concerned that many people experienced in the rural and farming ways of life may move away from the area. Others felt a National Park could lead to changes into regenerative or wildlife friendly farming practices; *“landscape-scale projects such as managing uplands to reduce the impact of flooding downstream communities and working with land managers to encourage wildlife friendly farming”*.

- **IMPACT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON TOURISM BUSINESSES**

Respondents raised both positive and negative comments on the potential impact of a National Park on tourism businesses. Respondents felt tourism business could see a boost from a potential National Park, along with a possible subsequent increase in the tourist economy and tourism / hospitality jobs within the area. Some felt it was a *“fantastic idea”* and felt a new National Park could *“boost local economies, businesses and job opportunities for the local communities, many of whom are reliant on tourism”*. Others felt there would be no boost to the tourism economy, as most tourists would be *“day trippers”* who would *“come self-prepared”*, *“bring their own food with them”*, and *“not spend much, if anything, within the local economy”*.

- **‘GREEN’ DEVELOPMENTS / ECONOMY**

Respondents commenting on ‘green’ developments were mixed. Some were in favour of green developments, highlighting the area is *“well suited”* to the *“development of green energy generation and storage”* and expressed that Welsh Government *“needs to focus on improving jobs in the green and new tech economies”*. Others felt this type of development would *“spoil”* the environment and so, opposed these types of developments, commenting that a National Park would be *“limiting development of renewable energy sources”* of which several were *“broadly in favour of (but not at any cost) to protect the land”*.

- **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE**

Respondents commented on sustainability, social, economic, and environmental as well as social resilience. Most who touched on this related to sustainability, with a small portion commenting on resilience. Many felt they would like the development of a potential National Park to enhance sustainability, commenting *“it must at all times be approached in a way which ensures the sustainability of local communities and the local economy”*. Respondents felt a National Park could help communities become resilient and maintain resilience, both economic and social, making them more able to withstand the changes such a designation may generate over time. Some also felt the local economy should not become reliant on one main sector *“building higher value into local economy, i.e. not reliant on seasonal, low skilled and lower paid tourism businesses and jobs”*. Others felt a National Park *“can support sustainable rural economies by promoting local products and businesses”*. Respondents also noted an impact on agricultural businesses *“farmers can benefit from funding and diversification opportunities, such as transitioning to organic practices or hosting visitors at farm stays”*.

LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION, RECOGNITION FOR THE AREA, AND TRANQUILITY

80 (almost 14.5%) out of 553 respondents, talked about ‘Landscape conservation, recognition for the area, and tranquillity’. Sub-themes related to this topic included the impact of planning and development on landscape conservation, the impact of tourism, the beauty of the landscape, continuity of the landscape, and sense of place. Also, the questioning and identifying of who has been looking after the landscape to bring it to its present condition and who will look after it in the future. Reference too, to an unspoilt landscape, health and wellbeing, protection of the quiet areas and concerns for dark skies.

- **LANDSCAPE AND CONSERVATION**

Most respondents who talked about this theme included specific comments about landscape conservation. Respondents did not only look at the concept of landscape conservation but also the pros and cons of it, and what impact both conserving and not conserving the landscape may have. Most were positive and highlighted *“the area is beautiful”, and “has some amazing landscapes such as the Berwyn mountains which need greater protection as well as better options for people to enjoy them”*. Some comments were neither for nor against the concept of landscape conservation, but some did raise concerns such as *“designating most of Wales to prevent development and growth of economies is contrary to NRW’s core purpose of supporting people and landscapes and ecology”*. There were no comments which were specifically against landscape conservation.

- **IMPACT OF TOURISM ON LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION**

Respondents commented on the impact of tourism on landscape conservation, raising concerns about the impact tourism could have on the area. For instance, concerns for *“the development of*

what could be called a Theme Park for tourism” which could “destroy the very environment which is ostensibly to protected”. Others felt the impact of tourism could be positive on landscape conservation as the landscape is a “major reason for why tourists visit the area” and “it can be appreciated by following a number of trails such as the Melangell Trail and Ann Griffiths Trail”.

- **IMPACT OF PLANNING ON LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION**

Planning is a common sub-theme within a lot of answers given to this question. Respondents questioned what is possible, where it is possible, and how the governance of any new National Park will cover the planning issues. Concerns were raised about a *“lack of transparency”* and *“clarity”* about *“Welsh Government’s intentions regarding governance, including planning”*. Concerns were also raised about a potential *“increase in bureaucracy”* which would occur because of *“another layer of governance”*. Conversely, others felt there should be *“more enforcement of planning control in this beautiful area”*.

- **IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTS ON LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION**

Respondents commented on the ‘impact of developments on the landscape and its conservation’. Some touched on planning, the permitted development rights, and others on their concerns about ongoing developments such as the *“visually intrusive development taking place on the hillside visible from the entrance to Llanfyllin from the East”*. Others expressed strong concern for large scale developments, stating *“this area should be protected from large scale commercial development”* and *“the unique nature of the proposed National Park needs to be protected and limited development should encourage sustainability of the region whilst minimising environmental damage”*.

- **HEALTH AND WELLBEING EFFECTS OF LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION**

The ‘health and wellbeing effects’ of being in the landscape and helping with, or even simply seeing its conservation were commented on. Many emphasised how *“mental wellbeing”* was *“a major concern for most people”*. Some touching on personal experiences and how *“being able to walk the beautiful landscapes around Wales has so much healing properties”*.

- **PROTECTION OF THE LANDSCAPE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Respondents touched on ‘protecting the landscape for future generations’. Many commented on the *“tranquil”* and *“unspoilt”* area, and emphasised the importance of it being *“preserved as such for future generations”*. Some felt a new National Park would help protect the area for the future, commenting on the down sides of green belts, the need for a *“different approach to land conservation”* and *positivity and hope that “creating new National Parks will go some way to conserving wilder landscapes for future generations to enjoy”*. Others however, raised concerns about the effect a new National Park may have on local communities by *“putting extra strain on local land and home owners”, “emotionally”, “mentally”* and lead to them *“consuming a vast amount of time worrying about their futures whilst already doing their utmost to protect the precious landscape for future generations”*.

- **LAND CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE FUTURE**

Respondents commented on the ‘land conservation and management in the future’. Some expressed what they felt was *“an integral part of the management plan”* which included *“nature recovery”, “carbon storage”, and “flood mitigation”*. A few farmers positively believe *“the National Park status will support the move towards more sustainable land management”* for farmers in the area. Others raised concerns about the potential conflict between land management and

conservation, commenting *“land management itself involves setting objectives, some of which may conflict”*.

- **RECOGNITION OF THE AREA**

Whilst ‘recognition of the area’ was identified as a major theme in the last public engagement, this time, only a few respondents commented on it. Some expressed confusion around the term, as they questioned *“area recognition? What's that?”*. Once again, as previously emphasised in the 2023 public engagement there was emphasis on the *“recognition of the importance of unspoilt landscapes and quiet spaces to the mental health and well-being of a broad cross section of society”* and those who lived in Tanat Valley in particular felt strongly that they *“would like to see the area’s natural beauty recognised and maintained”*.

- **PROTECTION OF THE QUIET AND PEACEFUL AREAS**

Respondents recognised the peace and tranquillity of the area, emphasising how *“preservation of the area as a place of natural beauty and tranquillity is essential”*, and going on to outline their thoughts on the threats to the peace and tranquillity *“it is under threat from the widespread development of windfarms and associated infrastructure”*. Others were concerned about the impact increased tourism may have on these peaceful areas, stressing that *“our privacy and tranquillity will be impacted by all the extra visitors”* and that *“additional tourism requires infrastructure, which impacts on tranquillity”*.

ACCESS ISSUES & OUTDOOR RECREATION

66 (almost 12%) out of the 553 respondents, commented on ‘access issues and outdoor recreation’. Responses related to access covered a wide range of categories, from access to the National Park’s proposed draft boundary via cars, public transport, or active travel, roads within the proposed National Park, parking once there, and footpaths and bridleways. Outdoor recreation was touched on in answer to this question, but not in any detail.

- **ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL PARK’S PROPOSED DRAFT BOUNDARY**

Respondents commented on the transport links leading to the National Park’s proposed draft boundary. The comments made related to the main highways, including the A55, A5 and A483. Concerns were raised about the normal levels of traffic these road carry and how they often become congested. Some emphasised their unease that if more traffic used these main roads, they may not be able to cope with the volumes, comments included *“the nameless road which forms much of the boundary near my property is now seriously over-used by heavy traffic”*.

- **ROAD WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK’S PROPOSED DRAFT BOUNDARY**

Respondents felt the local roads within the National Park’s proposed draft boundary were *“often narrow”* and not well maintained and so *“would need upgrading if this was a National Park”*. Some even suggested building new roads specifically for access to the new National Park. For example, some proposed building *“a new road from Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant that bypasses all the current tiny roads/houses so there is a wide enough road to take all visitors to the car park at Pistyll Rhaeadr”*. Many commented that *“access can sometimes take 2 hours (with people abandoning their cars) so this needs to be addressed for the locals”*.

- **CAR PARKS WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK'S PROPOSED DRAFT BOUNDARY**

Respondents raised questions about the amount of car parking within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Some highlighting that *"car parking is an issue in Llandegla as presently we are getting walkers parking on the road and blocking access for the bus to turn round as this is becoming quite an issue"*. There were concerns that if this is already happening, then these issues are likely to get worse if more tourists are attracted to the area.

- **FOOTPATHS & BRIDLEWAYS WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK'S PROPOSED DRAFT BOUNDARY**

Respondents were concerned about the condition and quantity of footpaths and bridleways within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. There were concerns for the fact people often do not keep to the footpaths but rather walk over farmed land which causes *"damage"* and *"disruption"*. Concerns were raised about the signage, stiles and gates for paths and bridleways, and a probable need to improve this should the area be designated as a National Park. Others emphasised the health and wellbeing effects of being in the outdoors and felt that a National Park could enhance this by encouraging *"more people to use and appreciate our great outdoors"* which would *"improve their health"* and *"improve the condition of footpaths and bridlepaths"*. Others felt the footpath and bridleway network would be improved to allow accessibility for all, stating *"the geography and built environment of the Dee Valley presents an opportunity to develop an interconnected area of disabled access leisure facilities"*.

CULTURE & HERITAGE

62 (11.2%) out of 553 respondents mentioned 'culture and heritage'. Many feared culture and heritage would be lost, whilst others felt a potential National Park could be an opportunity to showcase the culture and heritage of the area. The Welsh language, industrial and built heritage was commented on as being integral to the area's culture and heritage.

- **CULTURE**

Respondents emphasised the importance of *"landscape and culture/heritage conservation"* and felt a potential National Park would have both a positive and negative impact on local culture. There were concerns about a possible erosion of the Welsh language, as *"from a Welsh language and cultural perspective, encouraging non-local visitors will speed up the erosion of Welsh language speaking communities"*. Others felt a National Park could help raise awareness and promote the Welsh language and culture by bringing them to the attention of a wider audience. *"Public Rights of Way funding and registering and upgrading historic ways to allow for inclusive shared access"* these, if well signposted and with appropriate information boards which *"include the historical culture of the area, its traditional transportation methods from farms, hamlets to bigger settlements and combing the Welsh language"*. The general, overarching view was that *"the Candidate Area is a special place because of its landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and local communities"*.

- **HERITAGE**

Respondents felt a National Park would affect the local heritage. Heritage features commented on included built heritage, and many buildings of historical importance were listed. Others commented on the quarries and mines in the area. The farmed landscape was also seen as a heritage feature of the area, portraying the generations of farmers and landowners who have brought the landscape to the condition it is now. Welsh language, as well as being culturally significant, was seen as being a heritage feature of the area. Some referred to the archaeology and the need for a lead

within a potential National Park saying *“Archaeology - Whilst this is explicitly part of Heritage. Each of the three National Parks retain the Archaeologist”* pointing out that they can provide *“a focal point for a specific area of heritage, whilst the built environment can also benefit from a specific Built Conservation Officer”*.

HOUSING IMPLICATIONS

51 (9.2%) out of 553 respondents, commented on ‘housing implications’ within a potential new National Park area. The main topics commented on included any potential price increase due to designation, housing affordability now and in the future, the ability of young people to get onto the housing ladder should there be any increase in property values, second homes and holiday homes, and the impact this could have on local communities. There were no upsides commented on, should property values increase.

- **PROPERTY VALUES PRE AND POST PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK**

Respondents were concerned about the impact any possible designation could have on property values, both within and near to the boundaries of any new National Park. Some respondents asked for research to be undertaken to clarify this suggesting for an *“impact assessment to be undertaken of likely increases in house prices if the area was to become a National Park”*. Others quoted previous research, noting *“studies show that property prices within National Parks increase by around 22%”*. Others were concerned about their ability to purchase property in the area, some pleading *“do not create the National Park, it will increase house prices in the area reducing the likelihood of me being able to buy a house near my home”*.

- **YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE HOUSING MARKET**

Concerns were raised for young people joining the property ladder. The main concern was a potential increase in property value which could price young people out of the property market. Many expressed how *“local youngsters are struggling to buy houses now as the house prices are already high”* and so *“with a National Park the house prices would rise”* significantly. Young farmers were also concerned, some commenting *“as a young farmer, I will have to leave the area to look for a house as the house prices will soar”*.

- **SECOND HOMES AND HOLIDAY HOMES**

There were concerns that a large part of the local housing stock could be bought by people from outside the local area and used as second homes or holiday homes. Concerns were raised about the impact this could have on the local community and on house prices. Respondents emphasised the need for tighter regulations, stating they *“would like to see a cap on housing for Airbnbs, b&bs, self-catering, and second homes”*. Some even said, *“this needs to be put into the context of people also moving here to retire, which means further pressure on what housing stock we have”*.

- **IMPACT ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Respondents felt there would be an impact on local communities related to potential property values if the area became a National Park. Comments ranged from potential issues of road and transport links, congestion and the condition of the roads, parking and related problems and safety, both on the road and of pedestrians. Others worried about a possible increase in house prices

driving locals, both young and old, from within the potentially designated area, or not allowing them to get onto the housing ladder in the first place, resulting in them moving out of the area, although respondents do acknowledge that this is already the case in some situations. For instance, *“as it is, our children born and bred in the area have no chance of buying property in order to stay in the area and this will make it far, far worse”*. Concerns were raised about the impact a National Park could have on the Welsh language within local communities, if members of the community were not able to afford to buy or live in the area, Welsh speakers could be lost from the community. Respondents commented that *“being an area so close to the border and with house prices likely to increase due to popularity, this would be disastrous for the language”*.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

40 (7.2%) out of the 553 respondents commented on the ‘planning implications’ of a new National Park. Many felt planning could have a positive effect on the area, controlling and informing development. Some expressed *“the need for better enforcement of planning conditions and restriction on permitted development rights”* whilst assisting with conserving the landscape and protecting the natural and built heritage, *“planning constraints would also have to be increased to prevent additional destruction of the environment”*. Many felt the planning process may become easier if one authority becomes responsible for decision making over the new area, noting *“an authority with appropriate powers and a remit to protect this landscape would be welcome”*. Others felt planning could have a negative effect on the area, introducing extra planning controls, *“restriction on permitted development rights”*, adding extra layers of bureaucracy, increasing costs of applications and increasing timescales for decisions. Some questioned *“where the funding for this is coming from?”*, and expressed concern that it may possibly increase their tax burden, *“I certainly can’t afford an increase in council tax to fund this”*, or that it may decrease the Council’s coffers by diverting some of their income to cover the costs of any new authority. Respondents questioned the impact a new planning processes could have on their businesses, expressing concerns that it could adversely affect future development. Others felt a new planning authority could have a positive effect on their businesses, assisting with development and diversification. Respondents expressed how one major planning implication of a National Park could be that it blocks or slows down any major development or infrastructure which could negatively impact the environment and ecology. This was commented on from both a positive, *“such a beautiful area needs protection from Development”* and negative standpoint, *“being within a National Park will more than likely put restrictions on development”*. Some welcomed such controls and processes, whilst others felt it would affect the development of the area, its local economy and communities.

BOUNDARY LOCATION

The ‘boundary location’ was identified as one of the key themes in the 2023 engagement period. In the 2024 of public consultation, it was ranked last, or of less importance than the other themes previously identified. Out of the 553 responses, only 22 (just under 4%) respondents referenced the boundary location. This could be because there are separate questions related to the boundary later in the questionnaire. Of the 22 who mentioned this theme, some asked for more areas to be added, for instance, along river catchments at the edges of the proposed draft boundary, Offas Dyke and the upper Dee valley, to name a few. Others asked for less, some asking for the area within Powys to be removed, noting the *“boundary should go no higher than Mold/Rhuthin”*.

OTHER RESPONSES

120 (27.7%) out of 553 responses, contained information or feelings which did not relate to the question. Some contained suggestions, without any explanation, for example “road safety” was all that one respondent commented. Others expressed their view, without commenting on any particular theme, “leave it as it is”, “please don’t waste any more money, the people’s money”. Others simply objected to developments, for example some stating, “I am against Mynydd Mawr Energy Park”. Many of the respondents commented that the themes were difficult to differentiate, noting it is “difficult to pick three from the above list, lots of interconnected issues”, but did not carry on to explain their reasoning or the interconnections. However, most responses, whilst being heartfelt did not address the topic, for example, “please, please, please protect this beautiful area, before it too is covered in concrete and wind turbines”.

PROCESS

60 (21.7%) out of 553 respondents commented on the ‘process’ currently being undertaken. These comments ranged from asking for other reports, through to outlining concerns the respondent may have related to how the response form is laid out, or the questions within the questionnaire. Others questioned if the process was needed or if the process was impartial. Some expressed views that the decision had already been made, and this was simply a process looking to justify the decision.

• OTHER REPORTS

Respondents made requests for other reports or assessments to be made available, these are listed below:

- Benefit for Nature report
- Economic and Sustainability appraisals
- Economic impact assessment
- Desirability report
- Business case supporting the need for a new National Park
- The case for change

Others asked for more clarity on the proposed structure, governance and powers of a new National Park.

• QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

Respondents felt some of the questions did not provide them with an opportunity to respond as they wanted or felt they should be able to. For instance, in relation to this question, respondents felt it was impractical to be restricted to only three choices “why three only? I would say all are important”, “it is impossible to prioritize 3 themes. They all have equal weight”. Some felt the question was not well constructed, for example, commenting “what is the purpose of identifying ‘key themes’? The answer to that question will impact on the choice of themes”. Others voiced discontent about being limited to only 3 selections, “question 4 is very restrictive. All the themes listed are important and are all interlinked so very difficult to select just three. These themes cannot be considered individually”. Some disagreed with the way the themes from the 2023 consultation were grouped, “the way various topics are lumped together within some of these themes will give misleading data sets about the public responses to particular issues”.

• IMPARTIALLY / BIAS

Respondents felt the process being undertaken within the 2024 public consultation was not impartial. Some asked for another key theme to be “necessity, value for money, lack of impartiality

of process". Others were more direct, "a strong theme of NRW being in favour of the park when they are supposedly impartial". Likewise, "why use NRW when they are a biased body?". Some felt the process was being "well run", "informative" and "constructive". Respondents supportively commented "we implore NRW to press ahead". In contrast to the previously expressed wish to add other themes, some respondents commented that they did not wish to add any other themes "no, as I believe that you have done a great job. I wish I could have ticked more than three".

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

29 (5.2%) of the 553 respondents opposed a new National Park. Some simply objected a new National Park, for example "I DO NOT WANT A NATIONAL PARK - DWI DDIM EISIAU PARC CENEDLAETHOL" or "No. The entire idea should be scrapped". Others objected and gave reasons, for example, "do not create the National Park it will increase house prices in the area" and "a National Park is not welcome, we cannot afford it, our roads are in a dreadful state already".

QUESTIONNAIRE PART 3 – THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK CANDIDATE AREA

QUESTION 4A:

DO YOU AGREE WITH OUR CONCLUSIONS THAT THIS AREA HAS NATURAL BEAUTY?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- UNSURE
- DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE

QUESTION 4A, PART 1

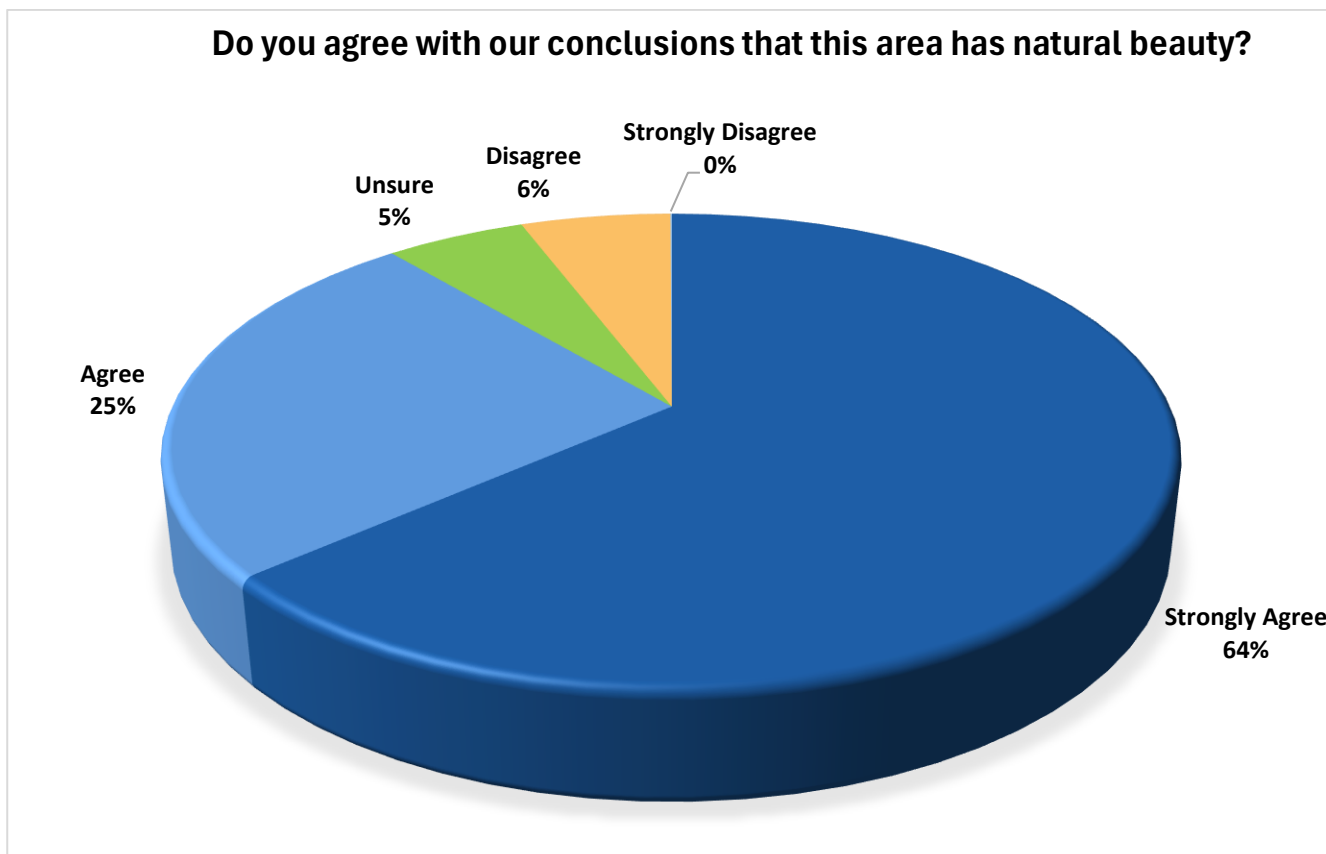


Figure 5: *The extent to which respondents agree with the conclusion that this area has natural beauty*

The first part of the question was a series of tick boxes allowing the respondent to express to what extent they agree with NRW's conclusion that the proposed draft boundary has natural beauty. Of the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, 1,871 made a selection of the above options.

Out of 1,871 questionnaire responses, 63.6% (1189) 'strongly agree', 25.3% (474) 'agree', 5.4% (100) felt 'unsure', 5.7% (107) 'disagree', and 0.05% (1) 'strongly disagree'. When 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' are combined to give us a clearer picture of the extent to which respondents agreed with the conclusion that this area has natural beauty, the findings were that 88.9% (1663) 'agree' and 5.8% (108) 'disagree' the area has natural beauty.

QUESTION 4A, PARTS 2 AND 3 OVERVIEW

The second part of the question asked respondents why they had made the selection they had and provided them with space to write their answer. The question was phrased '*Please give a reason for your answer*'. Of the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, 1,107 respondents commented as to why they had selected their answer.

The third part of the question invited respondents to add any further important information they felt should be included in NRW's assessment of natural beauty. The question was phrased "*Is there any other important information we should include in our assessment of natural beauty?*" the question went on to ask '*If yes, please give further details*'. Of the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, 483 respondents gave further details.

There were 1,590 respondents to Question 4a, (1,107 to the first written question (called here Part 2) and 483 to the second written question (called here Part 3)). The answers to Part 2 and 3 have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

LANDSCAPE

358 respondents (22.5% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) commented on the 'landscape'. 279 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has natural beauty, 56 'agree', 10 were 'unsure', and 13 said they 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. The main sub-themes were land managers and farmed landscape, mountains, valleys and rivers, industrial heritage and lack of development.

- **LAND MANAGERS AND FARMED LANDSCAPES**

Similarly to the last theme, a large quantity of respondents felt the landscape is in the condition it is, generally expressed as *"beautiful"*, *"unique"* and *"varied"*, due to the work of farmers and land managers who have looked after it and shaped it for generations, to its present condition. Some commented *"we visit regularly & never tire of watching the farm animals & wildlife across the hills & valleys"* and wrote *"beautiful natural scenery shaped and managed by generations of farmers"*. Others, whilst agreeing that the area has natural beauty, were concerned about the effect farming may be having upon the landscape, stating *"intensive farming is doing much to detrimentally impact this in the area"* and *"much of the area is intensively farmed, and this detracts from the beauty"*.

- **MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND RIVERS**

The landscape was characterised by its hills, mountains, valleys and rivers. Most respondents emphasised that *"the mix of valleys and mountains and hills make a stunning landscape"*. Whilst commenting on the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley some said, *"the area to the south of this comprises equally beautiful uplands, valleys and lakes"*. Others talked about the history of the area joining with the landscape, commenting *"mountains and rivers, alongside and amongst ancient and historical buildings"*. Some mentioned *"our surrounding Carboniferous Limestone scenery and associated industrial heritage, the heather moors and hillforts of the Clwydian Range"*, going on to say *"the rift valley of the Vale of Clwyd, the valleys of the Alun and Dee, our churches and chapels, castles, historic market towns are what we know best"*.

- **INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE**

The past industrial heritage intertwined with the landscape featured in responses. This includes mining, quarrying and rural industries. Comments included *"a ridge of hills and many existing quarries and former relics of past limestone, sand quarrying and limestone and slate mining with spoil heaps that show the past history of the area and the vibrant quarrying industry"*. Other respondents talked about the landscape in change, or recovery following an industrial past, writing *"as a landscape with an industrial mining past, still in recovery, the Tanat valley blends positive and negative human effects on the land, showing nature's resilience"*. Others commented *"as a former industrial landscape, the Ceiriog Valley in particular has historically seen dynamic landscape change"*.

- **LACK OF DEVELOPMENT**

Respondents were concerned about the lack of, or freedom from, development within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. For example, *"the landscape is richly varied. Wide tracts of heather moorland are especially precious, but diversity and freedom from development make it all*

the more valuable". Others felt development should not be halted completely, but that small scale developments should be preferred to large scale. Some said, *"a sensitive and informed new planning department must not stifle all new development, especially smaller scale community projects, but must protect our incredible landscape"*. Respondents asked for any new designation to provide *"protection from non-sensitive development"*, *"especially wind farms"*.

AGRICULTURAL & LAND MANAGEMENT

240 respondents commented on 'agricultural and land management'. 97 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has natural beauty, 80 'agree', 17 were 'unsure', 45 'disagree', and 1 said they 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. The main sub themes were natural beauty created by the farmers / land managers, nature friendly farming, and biodiversity and traffic.

- **NATURAL BEAUTY CREATED BY FARMERS / LAND MANAGERS**

As raised in previous questions, most respondents noted that the natural beauty of the area is "not natural", rather it has been created by the farmers and land managers over many generations. Some said, *"it does have beauty and that is because generations of farmers have farmed and managed the often difficult terrain"*. Others echoed this, commenting *"all beauty has been managed by landowners and carefully managed tourism"*. But not all responses felt the farming community were enhancing the natural beauty, as expressed *"it is beautiful compared to many more populated areas but it's natural beauty is already compromised by human intervention (sheep deserts)"*. Others commented *"some of the beauty is managed as opposed to natural"*. There were additional comments along the same lines, saying *"much of the more agriculturally active areas only have remnants of the historically attractive and nature rich farmland with the remainder being progressively destroyed by the increasingly industrialised farming practices of landowners with little respect for the health of the natural environment"*.

There were very similar answers from both the 'agree' and 'disagree' side of the responses. This is due to respondents' interpretation of the question resulting in a similar view within the written response but seemingly opposing views in their initial selections.

- **NATURE FRIENDLY FARMING**

Most respondents felt the general style of farming, especially in the uplands of the National Park's proposed draft boundary, was effectively a very *"nature friendly"* style of farming. Some commented that *"the largely non-intensive nature of the farming has ensured very attractive landscapes with many intact hedgerows and small woodlands at the lower levels. Levels of biodiversity are high"*. Similarly, respondents commented *"while the nature and landscape can be said to be beautiful it is also clearly managed, that is to say, the impact of human agriculture is widespread"*. Whilst upland farming was seen as sensitive, the opposite was felt about low-land farming and possible intensive farming within the lowland areas. Some said, *"it provides opportunities for tranquillity and connection to nature, which is accessible for the urban populations of north east Wales, in an environment which although influenced by humans is nevertheless distinct from the lowland/valley intensively farmed landscapes"*.

- **BIODIVERSITY**

Many respondents felt the area has balanced wildlife with farming and that the habitats and wildlife are biodiverse, commenting that *"it is a blend of natural and farmed landscape that looks nice and is beneficial to wildlife"*. Some felt *"these areas have the potential to be even better areas of biodiversity through improved management contributing not only to the area but also the wider*

world". Likewise, some said *"it is an area of phenomenal beauty, tranquillity, natural biodiversity"*. Others were concerned about a lack of biodiversity in a few areas, for instance *"unlike natural woodlands, which are rich in biodiversity and scenic variety, livestock farmland is often dominated by monocultures and scarred by the impacts of overgrazing. These areas lose the intricate balance of native plants and animals that define a healthy ecosystem, replaced instead by uniform grasslands or crops for feed"*.

- **TRAFFIC / TOURISTS**

Respondents felt the area is a mixture between the wild and managed environment, which should be open to all to enjoy. For example, commenting on *"the contrast and harmony between wild and domestic animals. A wonderful space to be enjoyed by local people and shared with tourists."*

Many felt the area was already a tourist destination; noting, *"the popularity of this area for tourism and recreation is evidence of its natural beauty"*. Conversely, others felt *"the area has natural beauty and this in large part is because it is still a proper rural economy unspoilt by mass tourism"*. Some expressed concerns related to tourism within the area, commenting *"the tourists whilst well-meaning will undoubtedly erode, litter and change the landscape quicker than any farmer ever would"*. While others wrote *"the local farmers and residents are what keeps the area as naturally beautiful as it is, we don't need more tourists, more traffic, more litter, more restrictions on farmers"*.

TOURISM

177 respondents (11.1% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) commented on 'tourism'. 98 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has natural beauty, 56 'agree', 10 were 'unsure', and 13 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. The main sub-themes were: the impact of tourism on the environment, local economy, tourists behaviour, and the effects on local communities.

- **IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

Respondents were concerned about the potential damage to the environment which could occur due to an increase in tourist numbers. Some respondents gave their views based on perceived impacts within other National Parks, for example, commenting from their own personal experience, a respondent said, *"I have also lived in Snowdonia National Park and first hand witnessed the damage to the environment and wildlife by tourism"*. Others felt the environment and countryside have many positive effects on visitors to the area, are *"important for tourism and people's mental well-being"*. Most expressed concern for the negative impact of tourism on the environment, emphasising a *"a wonderful environment will be turned to a horrid environment if too many humans descend to that location"*.

- **IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Respondents' views on the potential impact on the local economy from tourism was split. Some felt it would have a positive effect, bringing much needed income to the local businesses, potentially allowing for an increase in job opportunities, growing the hospitality and tourism service / provider sector; some wrote it about managed tourism *"allowing inflow of tourist money to help the economy without destroying the environment"*. Most were concerned about the effect tourists may have on the local way of life, impacting on working farms and land managers, whilst as claimed by some, bringing no real uplift to local businesses. Many felt *"turning this into a National Park will not bring any benefits to the local economy"*.

- **TOURIST BEHAVIOUR**

Respondents were concerned about the potential behaviours of some visitors. Whilst it is accepted that most visit the area and cause no harm, some do impact on the area, leaving litter, gates open, failing to follow the country code and showing little respect for the area. Some felt a potential National Park could damage *“the area with unmanageable tourism, traffic, pollution, litter, noise and light pollution”*.

- **TOURISM EFFECT ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Respondents' views on the impact tourism could have on local communities was, in the same way as the impact on the local economy, split between those who felt, *“encouraging tourism in the area which would no doubt be beneficial to local communities and jobs”*, while others felt there would be no impact, or worse, a detrimental impact on local communities; some commenting *“this natural beauty along with its communities will suffer with an increase in cars and airbnbs”*.

ECOLOGY AND HABITAT

169 respondents (10.6% of the total number of responses to Question 4a). commented on 'ecology and habitat'. 128 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has natural beauty, 37 'agree', 3 were 'unsure', and 1 said they 'disagree'. The main sub-themes were fauna & flora, the impact of major developments and impact of tourism.

- **FAUNA AND FLORA**

Respondents frequently commented on fauna and flora. Many feel there is a wide variety of fauna and flora within the National Park's proposed draft boundary, probably due to the diversity of environments, from peat bogs, through upland river catchments, rolling hills and valleys to woodland and farmland. Respondents commented *“if natural beauty is defined as “including flora, fauna, and geological and physiographical features”, then we have an exceptional and demonstrable region filled with natural beauty”*. Respondents noted that the *“habitats range from heathland, to moorland, to rolling valleys and hills, mountains, woodland, farmland, and further afield, stunning sand dunes, beaches, salt marsh and ocean. The ecological diversity within this region is staggering.”* The contribution fauna and flora make towards peace and tranquillity was also noted, for example *“hills and valleys, open space, tranquillity, wildlife habitats, water, flora and fauna all combine to provide peace and beauty through all our senses - not just visual”*. The overriding view throughout was that the fauna and flora in the area need to be protected.

- **IMPACT OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS**

The impact any major developments may have on the natural beauty of the National Park's proposed draft boundary featured strongly within responses, for example, *“we cannot destroy this habitat, it has taken thousands of years to develop and would never recover if dug up for an energy farm for example”*. Other respondents felt that the area is relatively undeveloped at present, as shown in the comment *“Distinctly undeveloped and relatively lowly populated with significant variations of flora & fauna, undisturbed by population pressures”*. Those who commented on this felt that the area must be protected from over development and that there should be the *“right development in the right area”*, commenting, *“protection for the habitat, right development in the right place for the right reasons”*.

- **IMPACT OF TOURISM**

Respondents expressed views on different sides of the tourism argument. Some felt it is important to attract tourism to the area, to show off its diverse habitats and ecology, while others felt that enough people were already visiting and that any increase stood the risk of damaging the varied

habitats. These two sides are shown in these examples, one view is *“preserving the natural landscape, protecting the flora and fauna, whilst also encouraging tourism in the area which would be no doubt be beneficial to local communities and jobs - if correctly managed”* whilst others felt *‘Natural beauty is being eroded in other National Parks because too many people visit resulting in damage to nature and biodiversity’*. Likewise, respondents explained their view that any tourism, along with other factors, can impact on the area, saying *“increased footfall, increased population and increased developments can all have a detrimental effect on the wildlife and the flora and fauna that inhabit these areas”*.

WILDLIFE

138 respondents (8.7% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) commented on ‘wildlife’. 105 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has natural beauty, 29 ‘agree’, 1 was ‘unsure’, and 3 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. The main sub-themes were wildlife including rare species, conservation of habitats for wildlife, an abundance of wildlife, the diversity of wildlife.

- **RARE SPECIES**

Respondents commented on the rare species which inhabit this area, including Black Grouse, Litter Terns, Hen Harriers, Curlew, Natterjack Toads and Pink Grasshoppers. Responses indicated that interaction or being able to observe these species within the wild, enhances personal health and wellbeing. Some felt *“people who visit North Wales and those who live in the locality to the benefit of their health and wellbeing”*. Others recognised the benefit these rare species bring to the area, for instance, *“this area is beautiful to visit, to see unique landscape features, rare species. Brings in economic benefit to the area beyond the scope of the park”*. Others were concerned about an increase in visitors and the potential impact this could have on the area’s wildlife, for example *“the disturbance created by the influx of additional visitors will disturb our native wildlife”*. Some also noted that many of the areas that wildlife inhabit are man-made, for example *“there are plenty of cliffs that birds like peregrine falcons nest are again man-made left behind after quarries have removed stone or slate”*.

- **CONSERVATION OF HABITATS FOR WILDLIFE**

A consistent view within responses related to conservation and protection of habitats to enhance wildlife and that the habitats need to be conserved for future generations; for example, *“Wildlife habitats, clean air and recreational areas should be protected for local residents and wildlife and enjoyed by future generations”*. Respondents observed that the protection of habitats for wildlife and outdoor recreation could happen together; *“the proposed area constitutes an important visual area of natural beauty and an area that should be protected for wildlife and outdoor recreation”*. Some felt *“any development must be sensitive to this - emphasising walking, looking at wildlife etc - rather than anything else”*. Others were concerned about the fragility of the habitats and wildlife; commenting *“once lost, potentially lost forever”* and touched on the impact a potential designation could bring, noting how *“natural beauty could be vastly enhanced if the National Park brought with it increased protections for wildlife and habitats”*.

- **ABUNDANCE OF WILDLIFE**

Some respondents merely stated the *“abundance of wildlife”* within the National Park’s proposed draft boundary whilst others went further raising a note of caution *“bio abundance. Biodiversity is regularly used as a catch-all term but the abundance of wildlife is generally plummeting”*. Most

claimed the attraction to the area is the “abundance of wildlife”, some commenting on how *“one of the reasons we moved to the area - beautiful views - wildlife in abundance including polecats , kestrels kites etc”* while a regular visitor to the area explained *“the area is outstanding and one my wife and I try to visit as often as possible for its unspoilt views and abundant wildlife”*.

- **DIVERSITY OF WILDLIFE**

As well as the abundance of wildlife, respondents also noted the diversity of the wildlife within National Park’s proposed draft boundary. Respondents observed that the diversity could be further increased with careful management; for example, *“these areas have the potential to be even better areas of biodiversity through improved management”*. Likewise, others felt *“being part of the National Park would secure long term funding for the continued protection and enhancement of a biodiverse and nature friendly area”*. Others raised caution about the impacts a National Park could bring, for example *“natural beauty is being eroded in other National Parks because too many people visit resulting in damage to nature and biodiversity”*. Some respondents felt the scale, and size, of the National Park’s proposed draft boundary, could be advantageous to wildlife, for example *“the proposed area provides relatively secure habitat for wildlife”* adding that the area is *“of a sufficient scale to provide a range of opportunities to visitors”*.

CULTURE & HERITAGE

137 (8.6% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) respondents commented on ‘culture and heritage’. 102 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has natural beauty, 28 ‘agree’, 2 were ‘unsure’, and 5 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. The main sub-themes were language, community history, built heritage and industrial heritage.

- **LANGUAGE**

Many respondents felt the Welsh Language forms a part of the natural beauty of the area. There is a whole question later within the questionnaire relating to the Welsh language, *please progress to Section 4 of the report to find out more*.

- **COMMUNITY HISTORY**

Respondents commented on the local culture and traditions of the towns and villages within National Park’s proposed draft boundary. Many felt that ‘heritage and place’ considerations should feature strongly when defining natural beauty. Comments came from people who already live in the area, and those who frequently visit, agreeing that the communities and their history play a vital part in the integrity of the area as a whole. Respondents felt that this kind of history needs protecting, and that National Park status could provide that, for instance, *“the natural beauty and heritage of the Candidate Area warrant properly resourced management”*. Others commented on the interrelated natural landscape, wildlife and heritage, some stating that the *“mountains, valleys, rivers, heritage canals & railways, waterfalls, woodland, serene & majestic countryside, farmland and historic Welsh communities all make this area stunning individual and beautiful”*.

- **BUILT HERITAGE**

Built heritage within the area comes in many forms, from mines and quarries, through castles, churches and historic market towns, to ancient standing stones and stone circles, Offa’s dyke and

various canal systems. Respondents commented on their interaction for example *“you could appreciate the natural beauty and the human influence on the area in almost total peace, finding stone circles, slate mines, untouched habitats and nature on any short walk”*. Others expressed that the interaction between the environment and land use, in turn, gives rise to opportunities to improve our health and wellbeing; for instance *“how the environment has influenced land use and then over the centuries has been regenerated to provide local and national development for wellbeing through recreation and accessibility”*.

- **INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE**

Respondents felt that, as well as agriculture, the area has a rich and vibrant industrial past, which, now that it has ended is resulting in those areas being *“reclaimed by nature”*. For example, *“the formerly industrial areas which have been almost completely reclaimed by nature that give the area a unique quality”*. Others echoed this view, commenting that *“as a landscape with an industrial mining past, still in recovery, the Tanat valley blends positive and negative human effects on the land, showing nature's resilience”*. Some commented on how the heritage has now provided recreational uses; for instance, respondents observed how the area can provide *“for wellbeing through recreation and accessibility for example Ffrith coed talon (Roman and industrial use to now walking and cycling areas”*. A few respondents disagreed with the concept of natural beauty, rather feeling as *“the beauty is not natural every single acre has been modified by agriculture, forestry, mining and other rural activities”*.

DEVELOPMENT

86 respondents (5.4% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) discussed ‘development’. 75 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has natural beauty, 8 ‘agree’, 2 were ‘unsure’, and 1 said ‘disagree’. The main sub-themes were the need to restrict development and how development could be accommodated.

- **NEED TO RESTRICT DEVELOPMENT**

Most felt there should be a restriction on developments within the National Park’s proposed draft boundary. This generally referred to major developments, such as wind or solar farms, but also major infrastructure developments as well, for example, pylon lines or power storage areas. For example, *“no pylons no wind turbines. Just nature as it should be”*. Others expressed that they *“do not want to see the environmental destruction of this area (by wind turbines or anything else)”*. Not all respondents were opposed to these developments, some commenting they *“support wind turbines - but how many is too many?”*. Several respondents looked at other forms of development, for example, *“it is a beautiful area, and needs to be protected from housing spread and the wildlife protected”*. Others expressed they were happy about this under-development, noting *“it’s a beautiful historical area that thankfully hasn’t been over developed, other than all the caravan parks which ruin it”*.

- **HOW DEVELOPMENT COULD BE ACCOMMODATED**

Respondents outlined they were not opposed to development, but questioned how it should be fitted into the National Park’s proposed draft boundary. Whilst these views were made, there were no answers or suggestions put forward as to how to achieve this. For example, *“protection for the habitat, right development in the right place for the right reasons”* but they did not go on to elaborate what the right reasons may be, where the right place may be, or what the right development could be.

TRANQUILLITY

85 respondents (5.3% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) mentioned 'tranquillity'. 75 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has natural beauty, 10 'agree', and none 'disagree'. The main sub-themes were peace and quiet, as well as dark skies.

- **PEACE AND QUIET**

Respondents all agreed that the National Park's proposed draft boundary had natural beauty based on its tranquillity, for example *"a tranquil area that remains natural and wild - permitting accessibility to the public"*, a view echoed in the comment *"clean water and air clean, peaceful green areas with no noise and artificial light pollution"*. Others, whilst agreeing the area was tranquil, raised concerns about the effect designation could have on it; for instance, *"the area has beauty, but a National Park designation would reduce the tranquillity"*. Respondents felt tranquillity was one of the main attractions for visitors to the area at present; for example, *"tourists visit for the tranquillity and challenge of being active in such natural surroundings"*.

- **DARK SKIES**

Respondents emphasised special features such as the area's *"unusually"* dark skies, a rarity within the UK, which should be preserved. Respondents wrote their impression of the naturally beautiful of the area as. No comments claimed there were no dark skies or tranquillity in the area.

RECREATION

65 respondents (4.1% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) mentioned 'recreation'. 61 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has natural beauty, 4 'agree', none were unsure or said they 'disagree'. The main sub-themes were recreations' interconnectivity with the environment, the use of the landscape and the views experienced during recreation. There is a whole question later in the questionnaire dedicated to recreation within the National Park's proposed draft boundary, as such please see *Question 4B* to find out more.

INFRASTRUCTURE

49 respondents (3.1% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) mentioned 'infrastructure'. 28 respondents strongly agree that the area has natural beauty, while a further 15 respondents agreed. 1 respondent was unsure, while 5 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the area has natural beauty. The main sub-themes were the condition of local infrastructure and the level of infrastructure available in the area.

- **CONDITION OF LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

No respondents felt the condition of local infrastructure was sufficient to help maintain the natural beauty of the National Park's proposed draft boundary. All responses related to infrastructure outlined that the infrastructure is generally in a poor condition. Local roads were identified as being in need of maintenance or upgrading if there was to be any increase in tourism, explaining that the roads cannot cope already, and any increase could lead to gridlock, for example *"more traffic could not be accommodated"*. Some echoed this view, saying the *"infrastructure is not sustainable for more tourists, roads are not big enough, car parks are not suitable"*. Others stated that Council toilets were often closed or damaged, bins were seldom emptied and often overflowing and that footpaths were in a poor condition or, in many cases, closed or blocked.

- **LEVEL OF INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE IN THE AREA**

As well as local infrastructure, respondents commented on the area-wide infrastructure, for example public transport and the availability of the emergency services. Respondents stated that there is “poor public transport in North Powys”. Others claimed their village had, at best, “*only one public service offering per day*”. Some were concerned the local emergency services and hospitals are “*already over stretched*” and worried about how they were “*going to cope*”.

ACCESSIBILITY

11 respondents (0.7% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) mentioned ‘accessibility’. 9 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has natural beauty, 2 ‘agree’, and none ‘disagree’. Respondents noted how potentially difficult it is to access the area, mainly due to the size and condition of the roads, coupled with issues related to parking. Others commented on the proximity to large cities, expressing that National Park’s proposed draft boundary should be accessible to be shared by many. Some felt there needed to be consideration given to accessibility of less able members of the community, to allow inclusion for all.

OTHER RESPONSES

404 respondents (25.4% of the responses received related to Question 4a) shared information or feelings which did not relate to the question. Some were simple statements, such as “*we live in a beautiful area*” or “*it has a natural fragile beauty, which needs protection*”. Others made observations that “*Prestatyn and the Glynceiriog area have nothing in common*” and that “*having lived in the area for 40+ years I see the natural (unspoilt) beauty every day*”.

PROCESS

162 respondents (10.2% of the 1,590 responses received related to Question 4a) commented on the ‘process’ currently being undertaken. These comments covered the same concerns raised in the previous section (Question 3b). Many felt the process was being “*adhered to*” and “*working well*”. For example, noting the “*very thorough treatment in the Evaluation Report*” and that they “*believe that you have captured it all*”. However, these supportive responses were in the minority. More respondents questioned the process, stating they “*disagree with the framework and basis of this "leading" question*” and said they were “*not convinced about the rationale for choosing the boundaries?*”

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

195 respondents (12.3% of the total number of responses to Question 4a) again commented “*no to a National Park*”. 102 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has natural beauty, 69 ‘agree’, 9 were ‘unsure’, and 15 ‘disagree’. Some of these responses simply objected to the proposed National Park, “*we don’t need another Park*”, others objected and gave reasons why they objected “*it is a beautiful area but doesn’t need change from how it is managed now*”. Whilst feeling that the area should not become a new National Park, the majority (171 of the 195 respondents) still agreed that the area has natural beauty.

QUESTION 4B:

DO YOU AGREE WITH OUR CONCLUSIONS THAT THIS AREA HAS OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPEN AIR RECREATION?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- UNSURE
- DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE

QUESTION 4B, PART 1

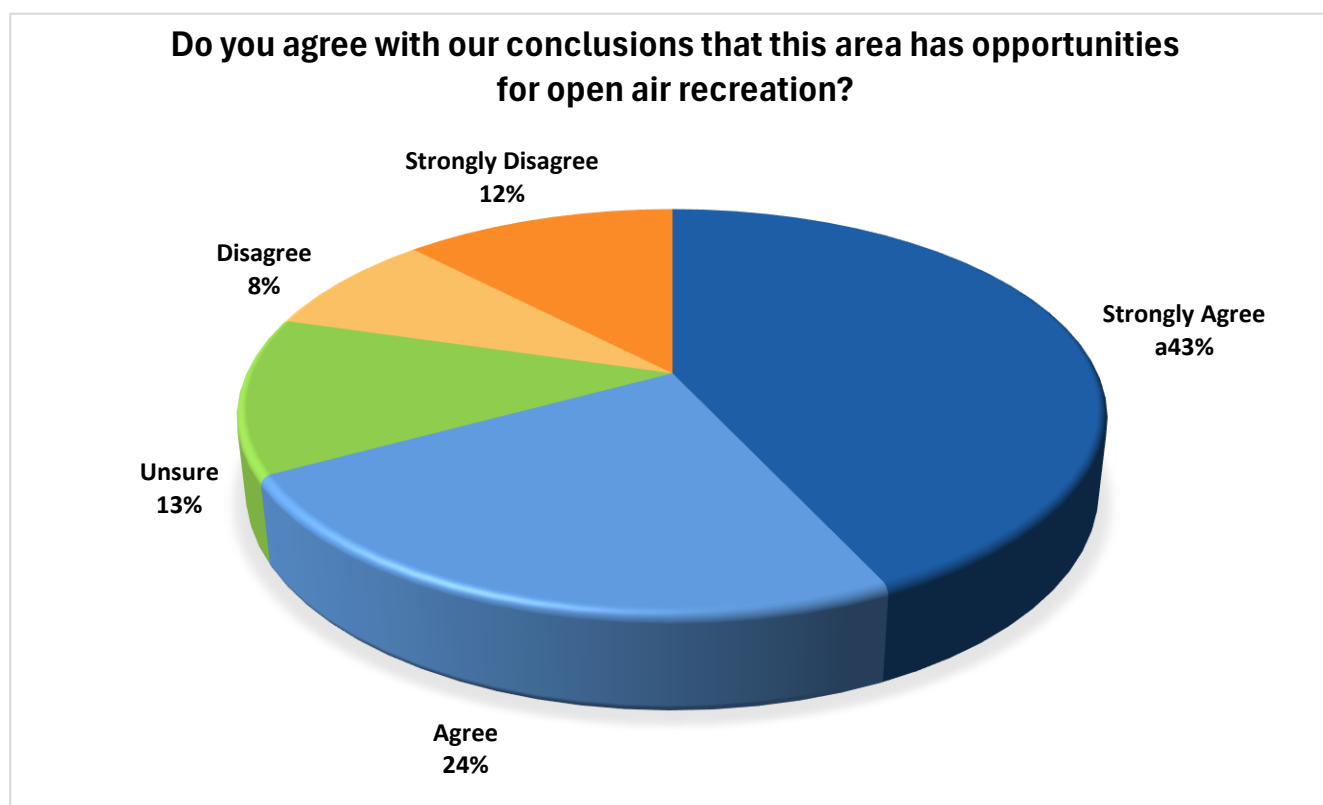


Figure 6: The extent to which respondents agree with the conclusions that this area has opportunities for open air recreation

Of the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, 1,864 answered this question. 43% (803) 'strongly agree', 24% (446) agree, 12% (227) 'strongly disagree', (8%) 154 'disagree', and 13% (234) feel 'unsure'.

When 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' are combined to give a clearer picture of to what extent respondents agreed with the conclusions that this area has opportunities for open air recreation 67% (1,249) agree and 20.4% (381) disagree.

QUESTION 4B, PARTS 2 AND 3

The second part of the question asked respondents 'Please give a reason for your answer.' Of the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, 1,045 respondents commented as to why they had selected their answer.

The third part of the question invited respondents to add any further important information they felt should be included in NRW's assessment of natural beauty. The question was phrased '*Is there any other important information we should include in our assessment of natural beauty?*' the question went on to say, '*If yes, please give further details.*' Of the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, 415 respondents gave further details.

There were 1,560 responses to Question 4b, (1,045 to the first written question (called here Part 2) and 415 to the second written question (called here Part 3)). The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

WALKING AND RUNNING

294 respondents (18.9%) mentioned walking and running. 204 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 60 'agree', 9 were 'unsure', and 21 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. The main outdoor recreational activity identified by respondents was walking and running. Almost 20% of the 1,560 responses to Question 4b related to walking and running. The majority agreed that the area already provides a wealth of opportunities for walking and running, for both the local community as well as visitors; commenting there is *"reasonable accessibility from urban centres; good networks of PRoWs / footpaths already providing access to nature, mountains, extensive views"* but that at present *"large tracks of wild country, little used at the moment by walkers or tourist"*. Respondents also, in line with previous answers, noted the benefit to both health and well-being brought by walking and running in the outdoors, and when coupled with *"stunning"* views, the benefit is enhanced. Not all respondents were keen for an increase in walking and running; due to it potentially *"spoiling the peace and quiet"*. Emphasis was placed on the fact that some of the footpaths and bridleways have already been damaged by 4x4 access, possibly impacting on the use of the footpaths and bridleways for walking and running *"terrible problems with off-roading bikes and 4x4s which has made certain walking routes impassable"*.

ACCESSIBILITY

252 respondents (16.2% of the total number of responses to Question 4b) mentioned 'accessibility'. 66 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 43 'agree', 20 were 'unsure', and 123 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

• PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Concerns were raised by respondents regarding the availability of public transport within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Respondents suggested that the infrastructure related to public transport needs to be in place, for instance, *"access by public transport and car parking needs a good infrastructure to avoid the pitfalls faced in other National Parks"*. Others expanded on this idea by commenting *"buses should be available to reduce the reliance on private motor vehicles. Hubs for rented e-bikes could be included at strategic locations"*. Some felt public transport is lacking in National Park's proposed draft boundary, *"availability of public transport and facilities for car driving day visitors. That simply does not exist in this area"*. While talking about infrastructure, including public transport, respondents emphasised *"without pre-existing infrastructure and services promoting more people to visit and use areas is counter-productive and damaging"*.

- **ACCESS FOR THOSE LESS ABLE**

Access for people who are less able is a very important issue which was raised as a concern by many respondents. Comments included *“there is certainly very little current opportunity for family, elderly or disabled access to many footpaths in the area”*. Some felt a National Park was an opportunity for the area *“to create accessible open space for differently abled people should not be overlooked. The difference that this could make to the quality of life of so many people is unparalleled in our country”*. Others asked for more information about *“planned details of parking facilities, (including insuring that there are more paths accessible for wheelchair users and the ambulant disabled/ those with visual impairments)”*.

- **THE ROAD NETWORK WITHIN THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK**

The general view expressed by respondents about the road network within the National Park’s proposed draft boundary is less than favourable. Concerns were raised about the condition and width of the roads, many of them claimed to be single track and in poor condition. Many referred to the “crumbling”, *“narrow single-track roads with insufficient passing places for vehicles”* and stressed the need for them *“to be upgraded”*. Respondents were concerned *“we don’t have the roads for the tourists that this so-called open air recreation will need”* and worried about parking along narrow roads, and the impact this could have on the emergency services, farmers and the local population. For example, *“we do not have the road infrastructure to support these recreations they will hinder farmers in their daily livelihood”*.

- **ACCESS FROM URBAN CENTRES**

Respondents commented that National Park’s proposed draft boundary was close to major urban areas, allowing access for a large number of new visitors; for example *“the area is readily accessible by road from large conurbations such as Wrexham, Shrewsbury, Telford, Liverpool and Manchester”* with respondents noting that access from urban areas could provide visitors with benefits, *“both psychologically and physically from exposure to this beautiful rural environment”*. However, some questioned if the access roads were up to an increase in traffic; noting *“access to the area from the West (England) is mainly via the A483 or the A5 - Neither of these roads cope with the existing traffic”*.

TOURISM

158 responses (10.1% of the total number of responses to Question 4b) mentioned ‘tourism’, related to opportunities for outdoor recreation. 47 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 38 ‘agree’, 15 were ‘unsure’, 58 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. The responses within this section follow the same themes as the previous section related to tourism. Some respondents see this as a positive step for the area, providing a potential boost to the local economy, potentially allowing new jobs and / or new businesses to grow, and already established businesses to develop and diversify, *“working as a hotel duty manager situated on the edge of this site I am well aware on the value of open air recreation as walking in our hills is the main reason our guests visit”*, and *“National Park status would not only increase visitor numbers allowing more visitors to embrace the natural beauty of the area but if well managed boost local economies for the benefit of its residents if carefully controlled and managed”*. Others felt the area is already experiencing enough or too many visitors and question if the area could cope with an increase, *“I am concerned more visitors and more outdoor recreation will affect the environment and tranquillity of the area”* and *“already too many people eroding footpaths, cause flooding as the rain washes down them”*. Others raised questions about management of any

increase in tourism, *“an increase in such needs to be sustainably managed”* and the cost of any increase in tourism, both to the local communities as well as the authorities, for example *“our indoor leisurely facilities are already under threat due to lack of money”*.

CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING

149 respondents (9.6%) commented on ‘cycling and horse riding’. 97 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 32 ‘agree’, 6 were ‘unsure’, and 14 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Respondents generally focused on the network of lanes, footpaths and bridleways throughout National Park’s proposed draft boundary. Some commented that *“greater account needs to be taken of the networks of quiet lanes, which provides a clearer picture of functionality of access and PRow opportunities (including horse-riding and cycling) to the countryside both within and outside of the proposed CA”*. Many felt some outdoor recreation should be prioritised above others, for example, *“yes - you should encourage walking, horse riding and cycling”*. Concerns were raised that as well as 4x4’s there could be *“quad bikes and bikes churning up fields”*. Respondents also point out that the area is already widely used for outdoor recreation and question if it needs a designation to allow this to continue, for example, *“people already undertake recreation activities, and travel from throughout UK to walk, cycle, horse ride and canoe etc. Creation of National Park will not make any difference”*.

TRAILS / ROUTES

129 respondents (8.3%) commented on ‘trails/routes’. 78 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 25 ‘agree’, 8 were ‘unsure’, and 18 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Many spoke about the extensive network of PRow’s, footpaths and bridleways which already cross the area. Most noted that the paths are generally well signposted, commenting *“it is a walkers’ and cyclists paradise, with well-marked public footpaths”*, however others ‘disagree’, stating *“footpaths are not clearly marked”*. Some raised concern over the maintenance of footpaths stating that they *“are not currently well maintained”* and so *“more people would probably lead to more trespassing off paths and more issues with dogs worrying sheep”* but others commented that there are a *“number of good walking routes if properly maintained”*.

WILDLIFE

96 respondents (6.2%) commented on ‘wildlife’. 47 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 14 ‘agree’, 13 were ‘unsure’, and 22 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Respondents commented about the wildlife National Park’s proposed draft boundary contains, and how outdoor pursuits can provide opportunities for visitors and local communities to see these. Others raised concerns about some forms of outdoor recreation possibly disturbing wildlife in the area, commenting *“trail motorbikes should not be allowed, given the noise pollution and disturbance to wildlife this causes”*. However, many felt it was *“important to have access”* but that this should not come at *“the expense of wildlife”*, especially to *“not disturb areas that are sensitive to wildlife, e.g. ground nesting birds”*. Some felt *“there is opportunity for open air recreation but what affect will this have on the wildlife that has been untouched before”*. Concerns were raised that *“encouraging more tourism will adversely impact wildlife and farming”* and that *“such a move puts at risk the natural habitat, local ecosystems and wildlife in general”*.

WATER SPORTS

70 respondents (4.5%) referred to 'water sports'. 52 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 14 'agree', 1 was 'unsure', and 3 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Respondents referred to various water sports from canoeing to canal trips, and many more in between. Most commented that they believe National Park's proposed draft boundary has ample opportunities for people to undertake a variety of water sports both inside as well as very close to the proposed draft boundary. Others responded that they felt a National Park would not alter the fact that the area could be used for water sports as well as other outdoor recreational activities, for example *"people already undertake recreation activities, and travel from throughout UK to walk, cycle, horse ride and canoe etc. Creation of National Park will not make any difference"*.

LANDSCAPE

69 respondents (4.4% of the total number of responses to Question 4b) mentioned 'landscape'. 51 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 13 'agree', none were 'unsure', 5 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Respondents emphasised that the area has *"great scenery views"* and *"it is an excellent walking area, with views stretching for miles when looking from the hilltops"*. Others raised concerns that any form of outdoor recreation should be managed so as to not affect the landscape, for instance, *"opportunities should be managed so as not to cause a degradation of the landscape, farming diversity and the large network of green lanes"*. Some counselled caution, for example *"recreation has its own pressures on the area of landscape beauty"*. The main concern raised by those who 'disagree' related to the pressure an increase in visitors may place on the area, for example, *"plenty going on around here without having thousands of tourists here to ruin the landscape"*. Whereas others felt *"it brings huge numbers of people and will create an urban satellite to villages, and we will no longer have a place of beauty"*.

EMPLOYMENT / ECONOMY

54 responses (3.5%) mentioned 'employment / economy'. 28 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 15 'agree', 3 were 'unsure', 8 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Many believed outdoor recreation would be a benefit to the local economy and thus employment. Most felt *"the economic benefits of open-air recreation are significant"* commenting *"Prestatyn is a Walkers Are Welcome town and sees the benefit of being part of a GB network of towns promoting access which generates income for local businesses"*. Others felt that *"creating job opportunities for local residents is paramount"* and that the *"Benchmark is Eryri and New Zealand where outdoor pursuits provide the engine for economy and culture"*. Some asked for the approach to be *"sustainable"* and not take a *"commercialised advantage"*. Others questioned if the visitors attracted by the potential National Park may arrive *"self-sufficient"* and thereby not help the local economy at all, and questioned the lack of infrastructure; emphasising *"how can you advocate an area being suitable for open air recreation without the infrastructure being in place?"*.

TRANQUILLITY

45 respondents (2.9%) mentioned 'tranquillity'. 20 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 17 'agree', 6 were 'unsure', and 2 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Respondents echoed what was said about tranquillity in Question 4a, expressing feelings that National Park's proposed draft boundary is a place of peace and quiet, which provides an opportunity to relax and unwind within nature, being beneficial to both health and well-being.

Others commented that whilst the area is tranquil now, it may not be if the potential increase in tourism is not well managed. For example, some were *“concerned more visitors and more outdoor recreation will affect the environment and tranquillity of the area”*. Some respondents commented on dark skies saying the *“black sky is a bonus for star watchers and walkers would love the area”*.

MENTAL HEALTH

39 respondents (2.5% of the total number of responses to Question 4b) commented on ‘mental health’. 32 respondents strongly agreed that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, while a further 4 respondents agreed. 1 respondent was unsure, while 2 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation. Most respondents expressed views which support outdoor recreation as a positive thing which has physical and mental health benefits. For example, *“outdoor recreation encourages a healthy lifestyle, aids mental health and leads to a better quality of life”*. Likewise, *“just being able to walk in nature is strongly beneficial for mental well-being in an increasingly stressful world”*. Respondents who ‘disagree’ with the conclusion that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation raised concerns, not that there were no opportunities, but rather the impact an influx of visitors might have on the local residents and communities. For example, *“during covid, it was unsafe to take the family out in the area for a walk or cycle as the traffic was horrendous”*. Others raised concerns that *“the park will be set up to prioritize the health and wellbeing of visitors with no regard to its residence or landowners. I myself feel under immense mental strain because the park will be forced upon us and often have sleepless nights”*.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

35 respondents (2.2% of the total number of responses to Question 4b) mentioned ‘physical health’. 30 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 3 ‘agree’, no respondents were ‘unsure’, 2 ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Most respondents expressed views which support outdoor recreation as a positive thing. For example, *“it is a great place for people to enjoy the outdoors and recharge”*. Likewise, *“spaces to walk, run, cycle etc are incredibly important for both fitness and good mental health”*. Those who ‘disagree’ with the conclusion that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation raised concerns, not that there were no opportunities, but rather the impact an influx of visitors might have on the local residents and communities. For example, *“introducing a National Park will increase tourism, more traffic thus having a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of residents who wish to enjoy the beauty on their doorstep”*.

CLIMBING

21 responses (1.4%) commented on ‘climbing’. 17 respondents ‘strongly agree’ that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 1 ‘agree’, no respondent was ‘unsure’, 1 ‘strongly disagree’. Most simply added climbing or rock / rope sports to a list of other outdoor activities whilst some explained their views further commenting *“the area contains important climbing areas such as Llangollen”*. Reference was made to the *“excellent opportunities for a wide range of recreation within the proposed area; most notable are paddle sports on the River Dee, fishing Lake Vyrnwy, rock climbing in Eglwyseg Valley, alongside mountain biking and hiking / walking in many of the open areas”*.

HERITAGE

16 respondents (1% of the total number of responses to Question 4b) commented on 'heritage'. 12 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 3 'agree', no respondents were 'unsure' and 1 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Respondents generally pointed to the wealth of historic and heritage areas within the National Park's proposed draft boundary, ranging from historic buildings to industrial heritage sites. Respondents asked for these to be promoted to inform visitors and local community alike of the depth of heritage of the area, commenting "*the current wonderful walks can be multiplied with signs to help people to enjoy the space*".

CAMPING

12 respondents (0.8%) commented on 'camping'. 8 respondents 'strongly agree' that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation, 2 'agree', no respondents were 'unsure', and 2 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Respondents, although few in numbers, felt that the area could be used for camping "*yes because there are many places camp, go on walks or canoe*". Some felt this may not be appropriate given the area is largely farmed and, as such, camping could interfere with farm activities, for example, "*wild camping may be suitable for some wilder areas of Scotland but where land is farmed, cultivated and grazed there are potentially many management and safety issues to consider*". Others felt this could provide a line for farming diversification and a boost to the local economy.

ARTS / PHOTOGRAPHY

7 respondents (0.5%) mentioned 'arts / photography'. All responses 'strongly agree' with the conclusion that the area has opportunities for outdoor recreation. Whilst no specific reason was given, it was noted by all respondents who mentioned either the arts or photography that this proposed area would offer opportunities. Comments were made that the area is "*a valuable resource of creative arts and social education/health and well-being groups and individuals*".

OTHER RESPONSES

642 respondents (40.4%) contained information or feelings which did not relate to the question. Examples of the type of response which have been categorised here include "*we don't need open air recreation we need our public services preserving!*" and "*the land should be left as it is*". Other examples included "*it is a working farming area with strong local communities*" and "*we don't need the noise*" and "*worried about losing our identity and damage caused to countryside*". Whilst these responses are noted, they do not really answer the question.

QUESTION 4C:

DO YOU THINK THE PROPOSED AREA SHOULD BE A NATIONAL PARK?

- YES
- YES, BUT WITH MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED BOUNDARY
- NO

- DON'T KNOW

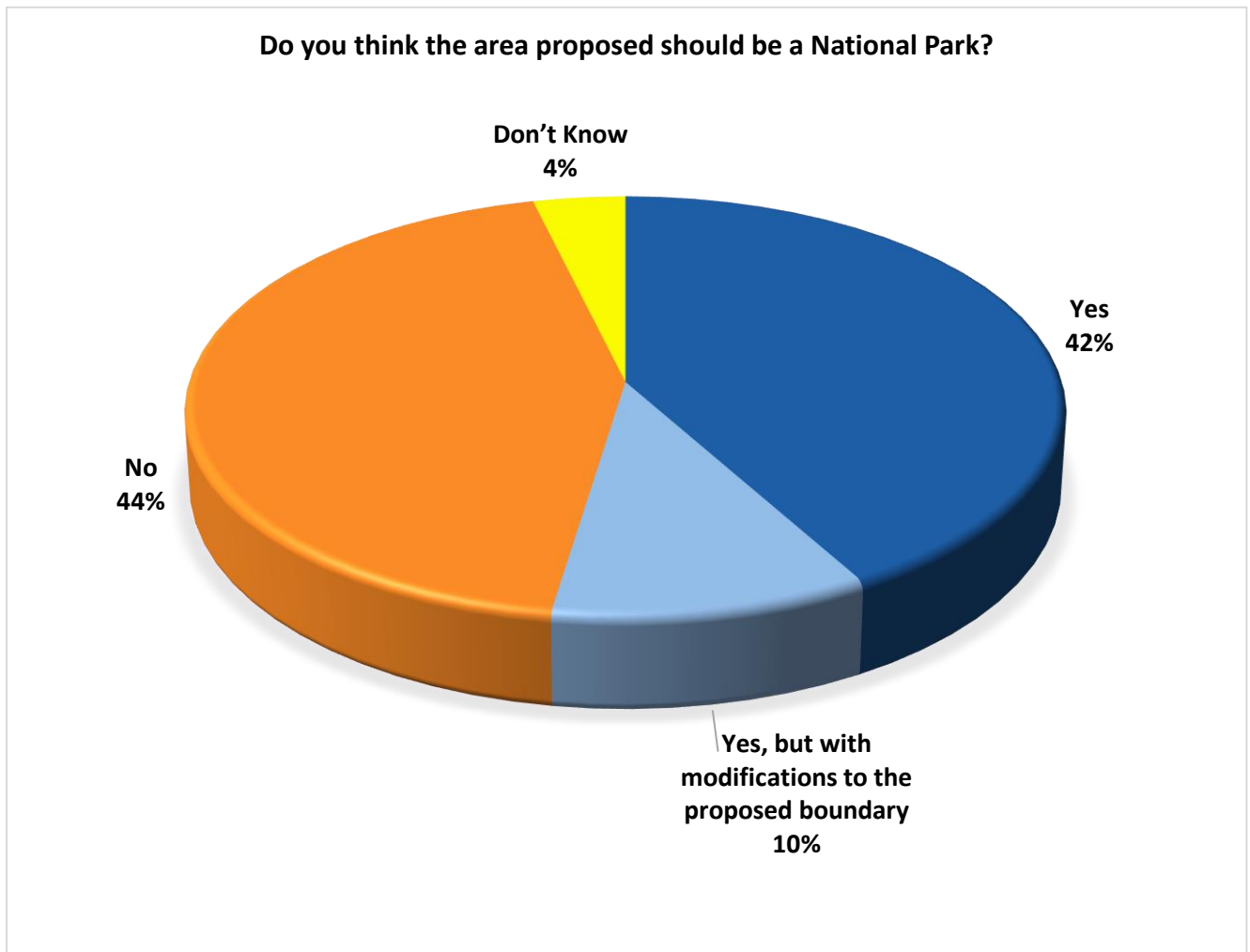


Figure 7: The extent to which respondents think the area proposed should be a National Park (1)

1,894 of the 1,911 questionnaire respondents answered this question. 41.8% (792) answered 'yes', 10.6% (201) answered 'yes, but with modifications to the proposed boundary', 43.7% (829) answered 'no' and 3.8% (72) answered 'don't know'.

Do you think the area proposed should be a National Park?

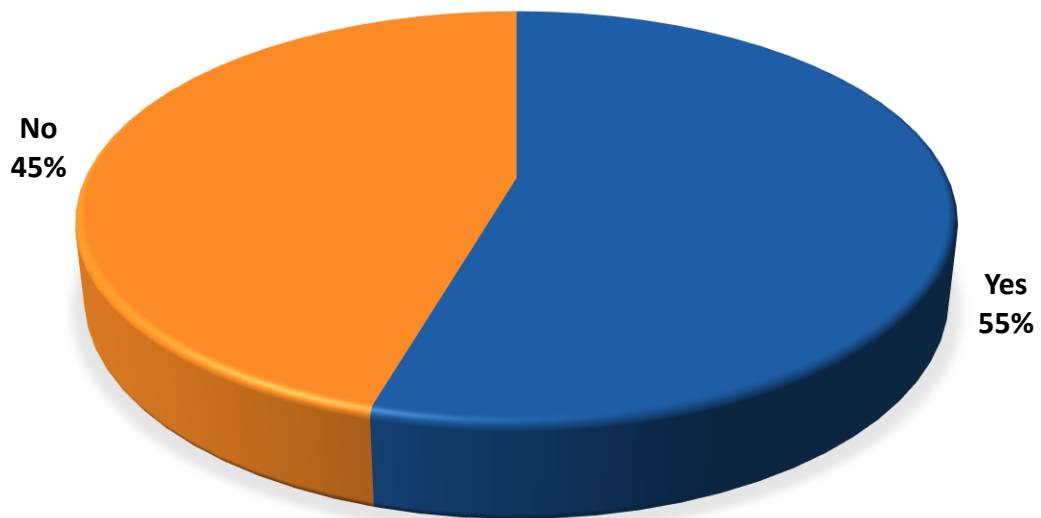


Figure 8: *The extent to which respondents think the area proposed should be a National Park (2)*

When 'yes' and 'no' answers are combined to get a clearer picture of whether respondents feel the area proposed should be a National Park the findings are that 54.5% (993) said yes and 45.5% (829) said no.

QUESTION 5A:

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH WHERE THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY HAS BEEN DRAWN?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- NEUTRAL
- DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- UNSURE

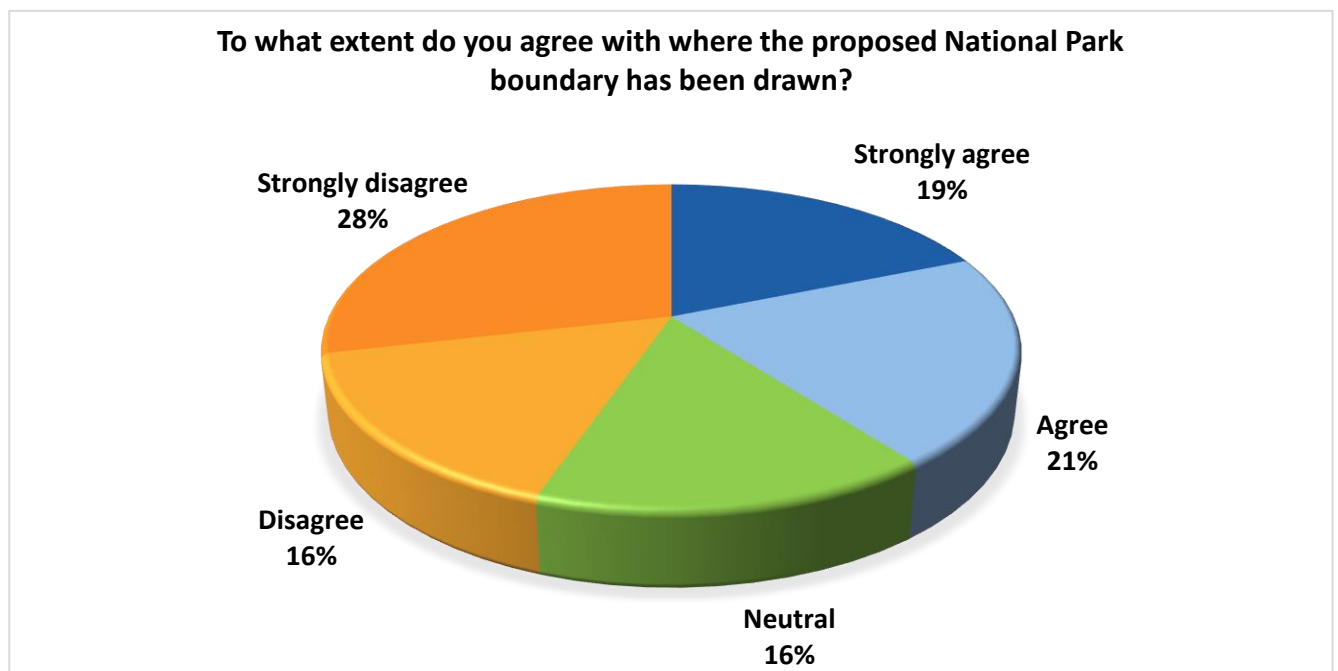


Figure 9: *The extent to which respondents agree with where the proposed National Park boundary has been drawn (1)*

1,877 of the 1,911 questionnaire respondents answered this question. 19% (339) answered 'strongly agree', 21% (376) answered 'agree', 16% (282) answered 'neutral', 16% (291) answered 'disagree', and 28% (516) answered 'strongly disagree'.

To what extent do you agree with where the proposed National Park boundary has been drawn?

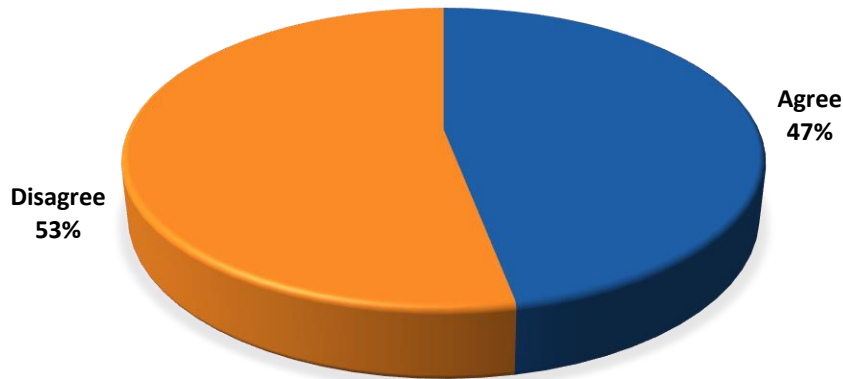


Figure 10: The extent to which respondents agree with where the proposed National Park boundary has been drawn (2)

When 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' are combined to get a clearer picture of to what extent respondents agree with where the proposed National Park boundary has been drawn the findings are that 47% (715) agree and 53% (807) disagree.

QUESTION 5A, PART 2

The second part of Question 5a asked respondents if they wished to add 'Any further comments?'. 655 respondents added further comments to their selection. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

DO NOT INCLUDE IN THE NATIONAL PARK

32 respondents (4.9%) mentioned areas they 'do not want included in the National Park'. This included if respondents simply felt the "*planned area still remains too large*". Others included general areas not to be included with comments such as "*the boundary shouldn't go up as high to the coastline*" and "*going as far south seems unnecessary*". As well as making general suggestions, some suggested removing specific areas, stating the "*Tanat valley should not be part of it*".

AGREE WITH THE BOUNDARY

32 respondents (4.9%) said they 'agree with the boundary'. Some said, "*if it has to be a National Park then the boundary makes sense*" and thought "*it's a natural boundary*". Minor concerns included comments like the "*only challenge is that internal connections and public transport will be needed to make the boundary meaningful to visitors and locals*".

COASTAL AREAS

31 respondents (4.7%) commented on 'coastal areas'. Most asked for the National Park's proposed draft boundary to be extended to the north to include areas of the coastline.

Respondents explained that the Gronant Dunes were an *“important breeding ground for the Little Turn”* and a *“habitat for the Natterjack Toad”*. Responses fell into all of the initial selections from ‘strongly agree’ through to ‘strongly disagree’, but consistently asked for the coastal area to be included with the proposed boundary for any new National Park, for example *“strongly agree but with a request to reconsider the inclusion of Talacre and the Gronant Dunes, a triple SI site important for terns, natterjack toads and also other forms of seaside based outdoor recreation opportunities”*. Likewise, *“strongly believe Gronant Sand Dunes should be included”*.

MYNYDD MYNYLLOD

29 respondents (4.4%) mentioned ‘Mynydd Mynyllod’. Most emphasised that Mynydd Mynyllod should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. This view was expressed by both those who agreed and disagreed with the boundary. Some commented *“many in my community have thought that Mynydd Mynyllod should be included. I agree as it is an area that I run and enjoy the wildlife in”*. Likewise, *“the mountains known as Mynydd Mynyllod should NOT be excluded, the recreational opportunities are exceptional, and the natural beauty is outstanding, despite the presence of relatively small wind turbines”*. Others commented that Mynydd Mynyllod should be included to protect wildlife; commenting that *“Mynydd Mynyllod above Llandrillo is an important breeding-ground for the curlew and ought to be included in the proposals”*.

HALKYN MOUNTAIN

26 respondents (4%) mentioned ‘Halkyn Mountain’. Most felt Halkyn Mountain should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. Many expressed they were *“slightly disappointed by exclusion of Halkyn Mountain and the Wheeler valley”* and believed *“further consideration could be given to the inclusion of Halkyn Mountain as an area with abundant opportunities for more moderate hill walking activities in close proximity”*, others responded emphasising how much *“Halkyn Mountain needs to be in there”*. Others said they understood why Halkyn Mountain had been removed from the potential National Park boundary, noting that at the initial consultation they *“questioned the exclusion of Pentre Halkyn”* but *“now understand the reasons for exclusion”*.

DEE VALLEY

23 respondents (3.5%) mentioned the ‘Dee Valley’. Most felt the whole of the Dee Valley should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. Many said they would *“like the entire Dee Valley here between Cynwyd and Llandrillo adding as the valley is part of the visual continuity of the area and also contains the majority of historical assets in the area”* and that they thought the it is *“crucially important for the entire Dee Valley from Corwen to Llanderfel to ALSO be included in the National Park”*.

HISTORIC AREAS

20 respondents (3.1%) commented on ‘historic areas’. Most asked for other areas to be included. These were not limited to a specific region but requests to include areas due to historical significance, for example, from the Vyrnwy valley, some asked for the boundary to *“include the whole width of the valley and run along its southernmost side. This would preserve the setting for the Grade 1 listed church in Meifod and should also protect the site of the Princes of Powys’ castle at Mathrafal”*. Others suggested *“Ruthin should be included”* as *“it is full of historic buildings and*

untouched so should be a place visitors are signposted to. It's the gateway to tourists from the northern coastal areas".

VYRNWY VALLEY

17 respondents (2.6%) mentioned the 'Vyrnwy Valley'. Respondents felt the entire Vyrnwy Valley should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. For example, *"the area boundary should not be drawn along a road. The whole of the Vyrnwy Valley should be included"* and *"the Vyrnwy Valley should include the whole width of the valley and run along its southernmost side"*. Some however, did not feel it was important to include Lake Vyrnwy within the proposed boundary, commenting *"remove the Lake Vyrnwy area and tack it onto Eryri National Park"* and others said *"some of the areas, such as Lake Vyrnwy, are already designated areas of natural beauty, so do not need to be included in the proposal"*.

BERWYN MOUNTAINS

15 respondents (2.3%) mentioned the 'Berwyn Mountains'. Many asked for and emphasised the importance of the inclusion of the Berwyn Mountains within the proposed National Park. Respondents highlighted that the Berwyn Mountains *"needed protecting"*, specifically *"some form of planning protection"* noting *"and for that reason it is good that it is included at this stage"*.

MEIFOD VALLEY

15 respondents (2.3%) mentioned 'Meifod Valley'. All responses felt the entire Meifod Valley should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. Many said they believe *"the entire width of the Vyrnwy Valley in the Meifod valley should be included"* and others asked *"why does it not include the Meifod area and Afon Vyrnwy valley?"*.

OTHER AREAS TO BE INCLUDED

99 respondents (15.1%) asked for 'other areas to be included'. As in the last theme, some responses were quite general, for instance, comments like *"bigger area needed to be included"*. Others were more specific; for example, comments like *"the Denbigh moors should be included"*. Other areas which the respondents asked to be included were, Hope Caergwrle, Ruthin, Llyn Brenig, Rhuddlan, Denbigh moors, Corwen Owain Glyndŵr territory and Gwyddelwern, Efenechtyd and Talacre burrows and Offas Dyke earth work to name a few.

GENERAL COMMENTS NOT AREA BASED

174 respondents (26.6%) provided 'general comments not area based'. Respondents questioned why the area *"expanded from that originally proposed"*. Other comments which were not based on the area included *"why where it is? Who decided to have that signed off?"* and *"Wales is rapidly becoming a country of 'theme parks', designed to encourage mass evacuation from urban areas"*. While others noted *"the National Park should protect the curlew nesting site"* and and felt *"this would be a huge step forward for the area's economy"*.

PROCESS

32 respondents (4.9%) commented on the 'process' being undertaken. Respondents covered the same concerns raised in the earlier questions which included challenging how questions have

been phrased, lack of clarity and how the boundary was selected. Many respondents felt the process was *“working well”*, and highlighted *“the summary of evidence has been well researched”*. Others who felt the opposite, felt so as they thought *“there is a lack of clarity and transparency regarding the impact of a new National Park”*.

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

161 respondents (24.6%) again emphasised *“no to the National Park”*. Many of the responses to this question, rather than answering the question used the space to raise objections to a new National Park. Some simply said they *“do not want a National Park in ne Wales”*. Others went on to explain they felt *“areas which are not currently within the AONB should be considered for that status rather than as National Park”*. Some said they *“agree with the boundary”* which represents *“an attractive landscape and cultural environment”* but questioned the need for a new National Park, noting they *“fail to see how that is any justification for a National Park”*.

QUESTION 5B:

THE AREA AROUND PWLL GLAS AND UPPER DEE VALLEY ARE NOW INCLUDED WITHIN THE CANDIDATE AREA. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS INCLUSION?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- NEUTRAL
- DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- UNSURE

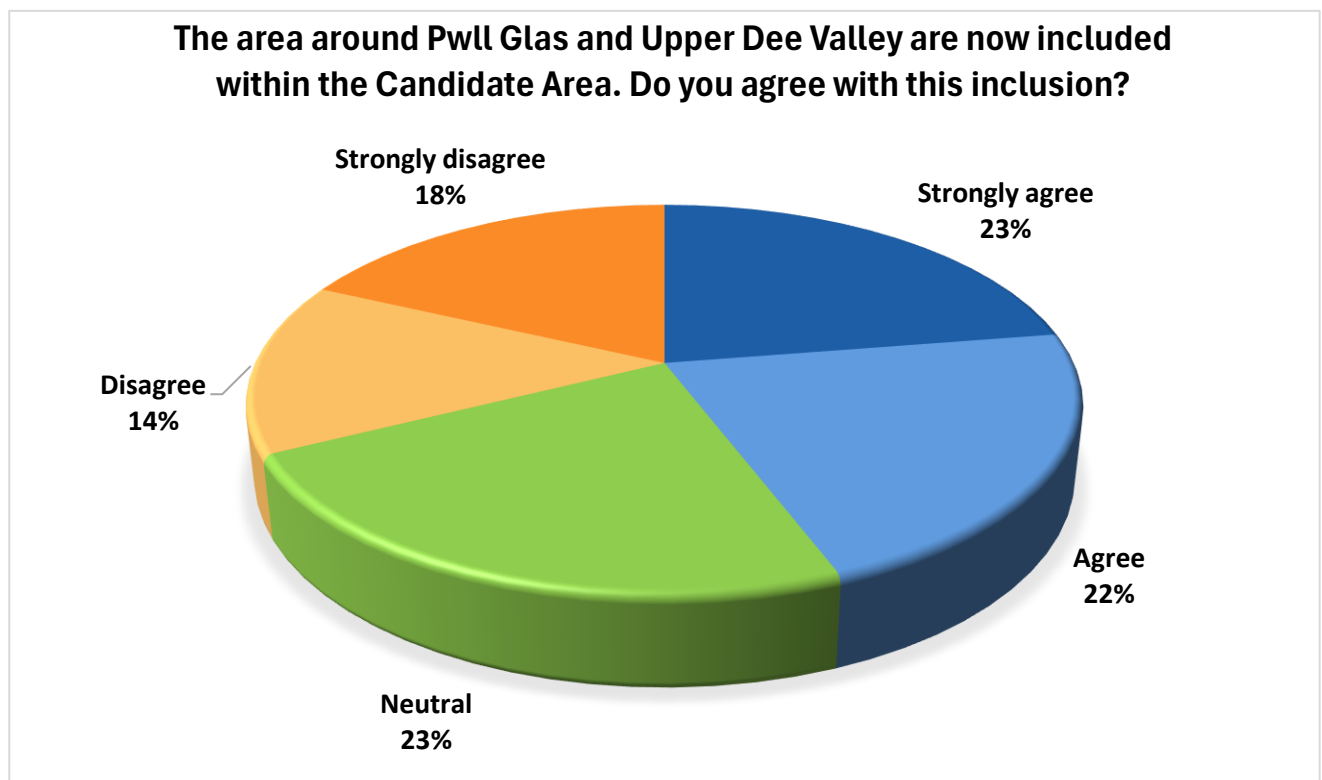


Figure 11: The extent to which respondents agree with the inclusion of the area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley being included within the Candidate Area (1)

1,856 out of the 1,911 questionnaire responses answered this question. 22.5% (379) 'strongly agree', 21.7% (366) 'agree', 23.4% (394) feel 'neutral', 14.4% (242) 'disagree', 18% (304) 'strongly disagree', there were also 171 respondents who selected 'unsure' as their answer.

The area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley are now included within the Candidate Area. Do you agree with this inclusion?

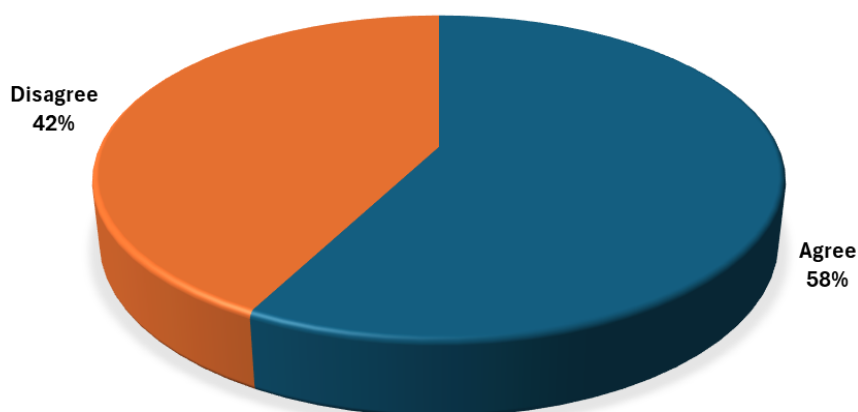


Figure 12: The extent to which respondents agree with the inclusion of the area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley being included within the Candidate Area (2)

When strongly agree and agree, and strongly disagree and disagree are combined to give a clear picture of to what extent respondents agree that the area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley are now included within the Candidate Area, 57.7% (745) agree and 42.3% (546) disagree.

QUESTION 5B, PART 2

The second part of Question 5b asked respondents if they wished to add 'Any further comments?' to the point that "The area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley are now included within the Candidate Area". 297 respondents added further comments to their selection. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed as shown below.

AGREE

8 respondents (2.7%) said they 'agree' that the area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. None of the respondents who 'strongly agree' went further than simply agreeing with a short answer, for example *"I agree with their inclusion as these areas also exhibit scenic beauty"*. Those who 'agree' all went on to ask for more land to be added. A few said they 'agree' but requested *"including the whole of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd and Pwll Glas to ensure that the management of the SSSI and management of the SSSI and associated features is coherent"*. Others pointed out that *"using the road as a boundary cuts the local community in half and excludes half of the Craig Adwy-wynt a Choed Eyarth House a Chîl-y-groeslwyd SSSI"*.

DISAGREE

15 respondents (5.1%) said they 'disagree' that the area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley should be included within the proposed National Park boundary. Some commented that the boundary, as it is drawn *"splits the village in half"* and also *"cuts through the SSSI in the area"*, and asked for it to be amended. Most suggested the area should not be included, specifically on the

grounds that they do not want the area changed *“the whole area should remain as it is now. And not labelled a National Park”*. Some objected because of the minerals within the area and their potential for extraction at a later date.

INCLUDE MORE AREAS

18 respondents (6.1%) asked to ‘include more areas’. Many asked for more land to be included without specifying the areas they wished to be included, some saying *“the greater the area, the greater the impact”* and *“the more of our region, country, planet we can protect, the better we’ll all be!”*. Others identified the area/areas they were asking to be included, such as *“Mynydd Mynyllod should be included”*.

GENERAL COMMENTS WITH COMMENT ON THE AREA

45 respondents (15.2%) provided ‘general comments with comments on the area’. These included comments such as *“I feel that all candidate areas offering both recreation, wildlife conservation and economic uplift should be included”* and *“I would need to see the reason for the inclusion of Pwll Glas”*. Respondents did not specify if they do or do not agree with the Upper Dee Valley and Pwll Glas areas being added.

GENERAL COMMENTS WITHOUT COMMENT ON THE AREA

45 respondents (15.2%) provided ‘general comments without commenting on the area’. For example, *“ensure whole SSSI boundaries are included in the Candidate Area”* which whilst asking for areas to be included, it does not identify which particular areas. Others expressed frustration about the cost, noting it *“appears to be a total waste of taxpayers money on a scheme that is not needed or have any benefits over its costs!”*. Many explained they did not know the area, for example, *“I do not know this area well enough to comment”*. Others raised similar responses to those given to previous questions *“Wales is a pretty place, but it’s all pretty for different reasons”*.

PROCESS

4 respondents (1.4%) commented on the ‘process’ being undertaken. These comments covered the same concerns raised in the earlier questions which included questioning the level of information provided, *“unsure until hidden details arrive”*, the level of consultation *“NRW did not see the need to consult in Pwll Glas”* and how the question is portrayed *“badly worded question - it is only a VERY SMALL part of EA20”*.

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

84 respondents (28.3%) again, mentioned “no to the National Park”. Most reject the concept of a National Park, some with reasons, others without. Most simply reject the concept completely, saying they *“disagree with the concept of National Park”*.

QUESTION 5C:

THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE CANDIDATE AREA: GRONANT DUNES, VALE OF CLWYD, HALKYN MOUNTAIN, HOPE MOUNTAIN AND MYNYDD MYNYLLOD. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE BEING EXCLUDED?

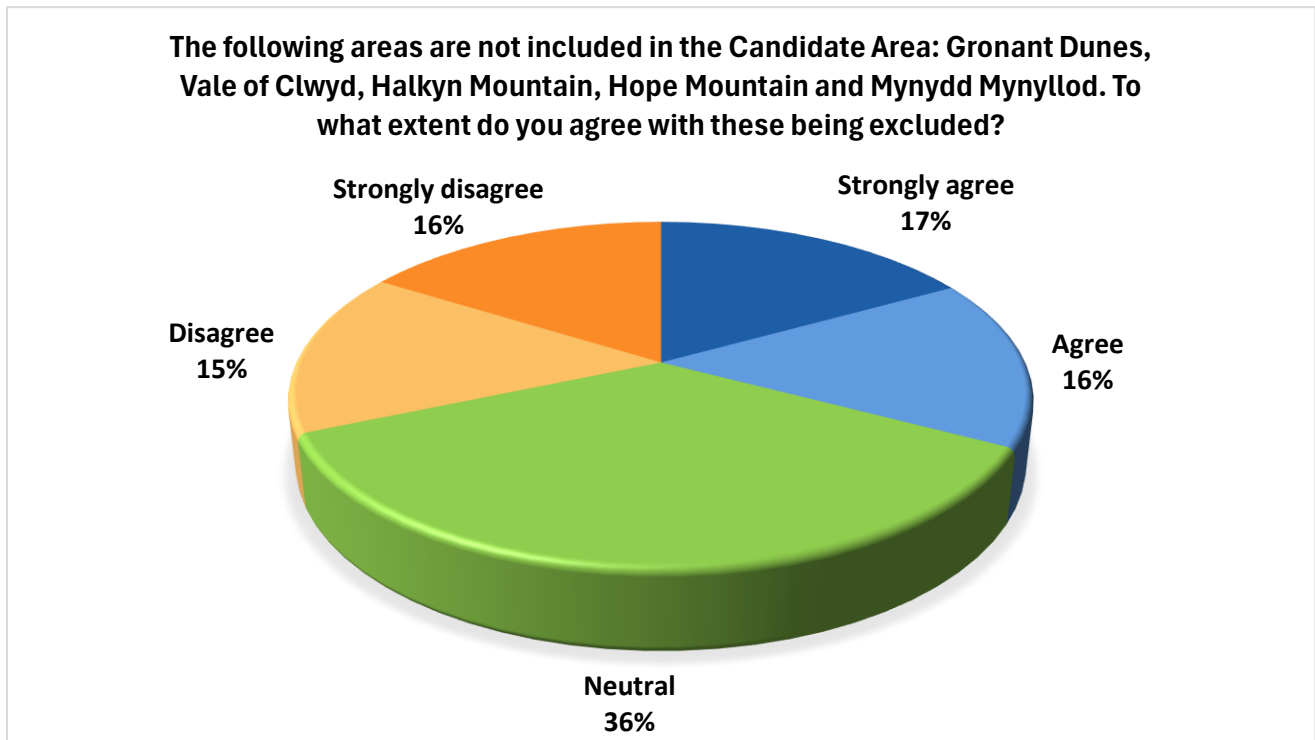


Figure 13: The extent to which respondents agree with the exclusion of Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod from the Candidate Area (1)

1,834 out of 1,911 who responded to the questionnaire answered this questions. 16.9% (271) 'strongly agree', 15.9% (255) Agree, 35.7% (574) felt 'neutral', 15.4% (247) 'disagree' and 16.1% (258) 'strongly disagree'. 229 felt 'unsure'.

The following areas are not included in the Candidate Area: Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod. To what extent do you agree with these being excluded?

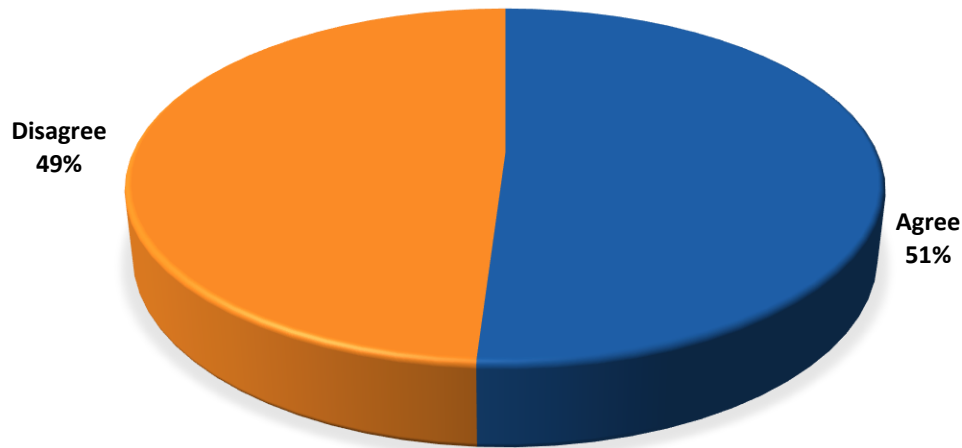


Figure 14: The extent to which respondents agree with the exclusion of Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod from the Candidate Area (2)

When 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' are combined to give us a clearer picture of to what extent respondents agree with Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain, and Mynydd Mynyllod being excluded from the Candidate Area the findings were that 51% (526) agree and 49% (505) disagree.

QUESTION 5C, PART 2

The second part of the Question 5c asked the respondent if they wished to add 'Any further comments?'. 485 respondents added further comments to their selection. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed as shown below.

AGREE

50 respondents (10.3%) said they 'agree' with the exclusion of the area around Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod from within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Very few gave any detail or reasons as to why they felt the areas should be excluded; some simply said, "*they should not be in a National Park*". Some gave reasons to support their views such as they thought "*the industrial activity negates inclusion of these areas at present but that could be reviewed in the future*". Others referred to the mineral content of the areas proposed to be excluded commenting that "*the exclusion of Halkyn Mountain and the existing quarries located in Wrexham, Denbighshire and Halkyn, (including Cefn Mawr Quarry, and Graig Quarry in Denbighshire) is supported*".

DISAGREE

177 respondents (36.5%) said they 'disagree' with the exclusion of the area around Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod from within the

National Park's proposed draft boundary. Within the theme 'Disagree' of these 177 responses, 3 respondents 'strongly agree' that the areas should be excluded, 5 'agree', 58 'disagree' and 93 'strongly disagree'.

- **GRONANT DUNES**

Many respondents felt Gronant Dunes should be included, without giving reasons other than simply as it *"is a unique area and should be included"*. Others gave reasons for the inclusion of Gronant Dunes as *"they are home for important flora and fauna"*, and *"the Little Tern Colony and the Natterjack Toad are the most prominent but there are also sand lizards and some lepidoptera specific to the habitat"*.

- **VALE OF CLWYD**

Many respondents felt the Vale of Clwyd should be included, without giving any reasons why, simply saying they *"don't understand why the Vale of Clwyd is left out"*. Others gave reasons as to why they felt the Vale of Clwyd should be included, such as *"as a former resident of Llanelwy (St Asaph) with fond memories of many outings for outdoor activities in the beautiful Vale of Clwyd, I would highly recommend its inclusion"*. Also, *"though the impressive hillforts of the Clwydians are in, the medieval towns, estates, parkland and field systems lower in the valley are out, and that's a great shame"*. Some agreed that the Vale of Clwyd should be excluded noting that it is *"not suitable"* and *"best reserved for agriculture"*, but called for other areas to be included such as *"I was hoping for Halkyn to be included as it's a fascinating area of our industrial past"*. Others put forward views related to one or two of the excluded areas, for example *"I strongly disagree with the exclusion of Halkyn Mountain and Gronant Dunes. I'm neutral about the other three"*.

- **HALKYN MOUNTAIN**

Respondents asked for Halkyn Mountain to be removed from the proposed National Park. Many said *"Halkyn Mountain and Common is a unique area that has more benefits for mental health, than many of the other areas that are being included in the park"*.

- **HOPE MOUNTAIN**

Respondents asked for Hope Mountain to be included within the proposed National Park; some commented *"I think the Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain and Hope Mountain should be included as these are wonderful areas to explore and are heavily farmed so need protection in order to save rare species found there"*.

- **MYNYDD MYNYLLOD**

Respondents asked for Mynydd Mynyllod to be included within the proposed National Park, some said *"I cannot understand the rationale of excluding Mynydd Mynyllod, which is a beautiful area, rich in cultural history and wildlife, including a high density of breeding curlew"*.

INCLUDE MORE AREAS

107 respondents (22.1%) asked to "include more areas". Most of these included the areas talked about within the question, namely around Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod, but other areas were also requested to be included. Some respondents felt the area should be expanded, without specifying where or why; some simply said, *"the more that is added, the better"*. Others explained how and where the National Park's proposed draft boundary should increase; a few commenting *"the candidate area is too small"*, *"it should include the area extending through Caergwrle to Caer Estyn. This clearly aligns with the objective*

of a National Park". Likewise, "Caerwys Lowlands" due to it being "important for dormice, bats, and native broadleaved bluebell woodlands". Others simply commented "if a National Park were to be established. These areas should be included".

EXCLUDE MORE AREAS

8 respondents (1.7%) wanted to 'exclude more areas'. Respondents took the opportunity to simply suggest that all areas should be excluded from the boundary, while others asked for Ruabon Mountain to be excluded along with Halkyn Mountain. A few also asked for Bryniau Clwyd to be excluded, which they explained is very different to the Clwyd Valley "Bryniau Clwyd is very different to the Clwyd valley - think the park should be for the mountains down to Llangollen only" and for north Powys to be removed, stating "remove north Powys from the candidate area ,we don't need a government run National Park to keep our area intact and beautiful".

GENERAL COMMENTS WITH COMMENT ON THE AREA

81 respondents (16.7%) provided 'general comments with comment on the area'. Some commented "the proposed park needs to include a section of the North Wales coastline to embrace the Gronant Dunes and the little tern colony. Also, the history of Talacre is an important aspect of this area", which references the potentially excluded areas, giving the respondent's thoughts. Others commented "the area of Mynydd Mynllod is far too beautiful not to be included". Respondents did not specify if they do or do not agree with the area being excluded, as such they do not answer the question posed within the questionnaire.

GENERAL COMMENTS WITHOUT COMMENT ON THE AREA

119 respondents (24.5%) provided 'general comments without comment on the area'. Some said, "massive area - doesn't require this protection" and "it is not needed and Wales cannot afford it". The responses do not specify if the respondent does or does not agree with the area being excluded.

PROCESS

9 respondents (1.9%) commented again about the 'process' being undertaken. These responses either raised an issue with the question, for example "the leading questions require clarification" and with the consultation process, "the exclusion of these areas, I consider, is inadequately argued within the reports". Others said they "disagree with the National Park and this questionnaire is biased to having a National Park".

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

51 respondents (10.5%) once again, commented "no to the National Park". Some comments simply rejected the concept of a National Park, some with reasons, others without. Reason shared included "disagree with a New National Park, as I think money could certainly be better spent fixing current issues". Also "no need for a fourth National Park totally stupid idea the other three parks are struggling with finance". The majority simply rejected the concept completely, many commenting "we do not want these areas to become a National Park".

QUESTION 5D:

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE CANDIDATE AREA BOUNDARY?

There were 497 responses to Question 5d. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

DISAGREE

108 respondents (21.7%) commented 'disagree' with the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Many took the opportunity to reconfirm their view that the areas around Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod should be included within the boundary. There were many other areas respondents felt that other areas should be either included or removed from the proposed draft boundary; for example, some said "*consider inclusion of parts of the Montgomery Canal*" or conversely, others said "*it should not include North Montgomeryshire*". A few requested the exclusion of any areas within Powys such as "*North Powys does need to be included*", some giving reasons, others simply asking for them to not be included. Some suggested the area should "*extend more south and east*".

INCLUDE MORE AREAS

66 respondents (13.3%) wanted to "include more areas". Most of these included the areas mentioned within Question 5c, namely around Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynyllod, but there was also mention of other areas for inclusion. For example, "*the limestone pavement at Coed Cilygroeslwyd and Galchog (Efenechtyd), and the Talacre Burrows should be included*", likewise "*would like it to include more land Inc our farm*" and "*Caer Drewyn and Moel Fodig hull forts need to be included*". Others said they felt the area should be expanded, without specifying where or why. Some felt "*the more that is added, the better*". Others explained how and where the National Park's proposed draft boundary should increase; for example, "*the candidate area is too small, particularly it should include the area extending through Caergwrle to Caer Estyn. This clearly aligns with the objective of a National Park*".

INFRASTRUCTURE

33 respondents (6.6%) mentioned 'infrastructure'. The main areas commented on by respondents were car parking, roads and toilets, and their concerns were around the lack of and quality of these. When commenting on car parking, respondents generally felt there was not a sufficient amount of parking within the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Some commented "*there is already limited car parking and public conveniences for more tourists to come to the area*". Roads were a concern to respondents with many saying "*we live on the forgotten roads*". Respondents were concerned about the lack of public toilets throughout the National Park's proposed draft boundary and the fact that "*evidence can be easily found that tourists are relieving themselves on or near public footpaths due to lack of public conveniences*". There were no positive responses related to the condition, or availability, of roads, car parks or public toilets within the National Park's proposed draft boundary.

PROPOSED SIZE

29 respondents (5.8%) referred to the 'proposed size' of the National Park. Most thought the National Park's proposed draft boundary was *"too large"* and *"vast"*. Others expressed the contrary view, saying *"make it bigger"*. Some (albeit in the minority) accompanied their view with their reasons; for example, noting the area is *"far too big - too many different issues in different areas. North of area, more towns and people, South of area less population needs access, less good roads"*.

FUNDING & COSTS

26 respondents (5.2%) referred to the 'funding and cost' of a National Park. Most expressed concern about the cost of a National Park and ongoing running costs for a National Park, for example, *"use Taxpayers' money to maintain such an extra-large National Park"* and *"seriously think about the additional cost of this. Wales cannot afford another designation"*. Other raised concerns about funding for the other Welsh National Park s, *"we have a National Park already which is underfunded"* also *"where will the money come from with other National Parks having their funding cut"*.

EXCLUDE MORE AREAS

22 respondents (4.4%) wanted to 'exclude more areas'. Some requested for Tanat Valley to be excluded, and the areas in northern Powys. Most did not provide reasons as to why these areas should be excluded, but one of the common themes given was the level of tourism already experienced in the area. Many asked to *"take out the already tourist saturated areas"*, with some commenting they *"do not believe that the Ceiriog Valley should be in scope"* as it has *"limited infrastructure for tourism"* and has a *"delicate cultural landscape which could be disrupted and destroyed by tourism"*.

AGREE

13 respondents (2.6%) commented they 'agree' with the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Many expressed support for the process being undertaken and the manner of its undertaking, some saying *"the area has been well devised and the evaluation report makes out a strong case for inclusion in its entirety"* and that they agree with the assessment because they *"trust your expertise and because one could go on arguing indefinitely about individual areas"*.

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE

13 respondents (2.6%) commented on 'habitats and wildlife'. Respondents were concerned that any proposed National Park may not necessarily help to conserve biodiversity and wildlife. Some felt it would *"do nothing to increase biodiversity or friendlier farming"* whilst others commented *"it should be as inclusive of significant areas of natural habitat as possible - to preserve & protect important breeding habitats for wildlife"*. Respondents also commented about potential areas which may have been omitted. Some when commented on the Dunes said *that they were "shocked and dismayed to hear the more unique (rare & endangered) wildlife habitats are excluded from the proposed area boundaries"*. Others suggested an alternative, saying *"the boundary should balance ecological integrity with practical governance. Connectivity between landscapes should be a priority to support biodiversity corridors"*.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

11 respondents (2.2%) commented on 'major developments'. These included wind and solar farms. Respondents provided both positive and negative comments. Some felt small wind farms would be acceptable, saying "*the small Braich Ddu windfarm should not influence a decision. Some small turbines are sometimes acceptable in some areas*". Others felt "*some developments, such as wind turbines, can negatively impact the landscape many miles from the development itself so wider landscape protection is the best approach*". Some were concerned about pylon lines, in parts of the Dee Valley and Meifod Valley, commenting "*the latter is threatened by a power line development!*".

OTHER RESPONSES

162 respondents (32.6%) contained information or feelings which did not relate to the question. These included response like "*too many restrictions on home buildings for local people*", "*too varied in terms of landscape and extent*", "*ridiculous*", "*will it make local government more complicated?*", and "*strongly disagree with the idea in the first place, farmers outside the boundary will have more freedom to diversify their farm*".

PROCESS

35 respondents (7%) commented on the 'process' being undertaken. These comments covered the same concerns raised in the earlier questions which included requests for more information "*need the map!*", comments on the decision making process, "*why are roads used as the boundary for the National Park rather than natural boundaries*" and other expressing concern that the process may not be genuine "*I feel sad that the decision has already been made and we don't have a proper say*".

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

78 respondents (15.7%) again commented "*no to the National Park*". Within this category respondents added comments which simply rejected the concept of a National Park, sometimes with reasons, but often without. Many repeated what had been said before, for example, "*I strongly disagree with any National Park being made*" or "*we do not need nor want a National Park*". Others gave reasons for their objection, for example "*creating a National Park here is unnecessary and will add further bureaucracy, deleterious affect planning timescales and guidelines*". Likewise, "*the government is short on resources, and this is not a good use of those resources*".

QUESTION 5E:

IF A NATIONAL PARK IS ESTABLISHED, THEN IT WOULD REQUIRE A NEW NAME. WORKING WITH PARTNERS WE HAVE IDENTIFIED TWO OPTIONS.

- PARK CENEDLAETHOL - BRYNIAU CLWYD A'R BERWYN - NATIONAL PARK
- PARK CENEDLAETHOL - GLYNDŴR - NATIONAL PARK

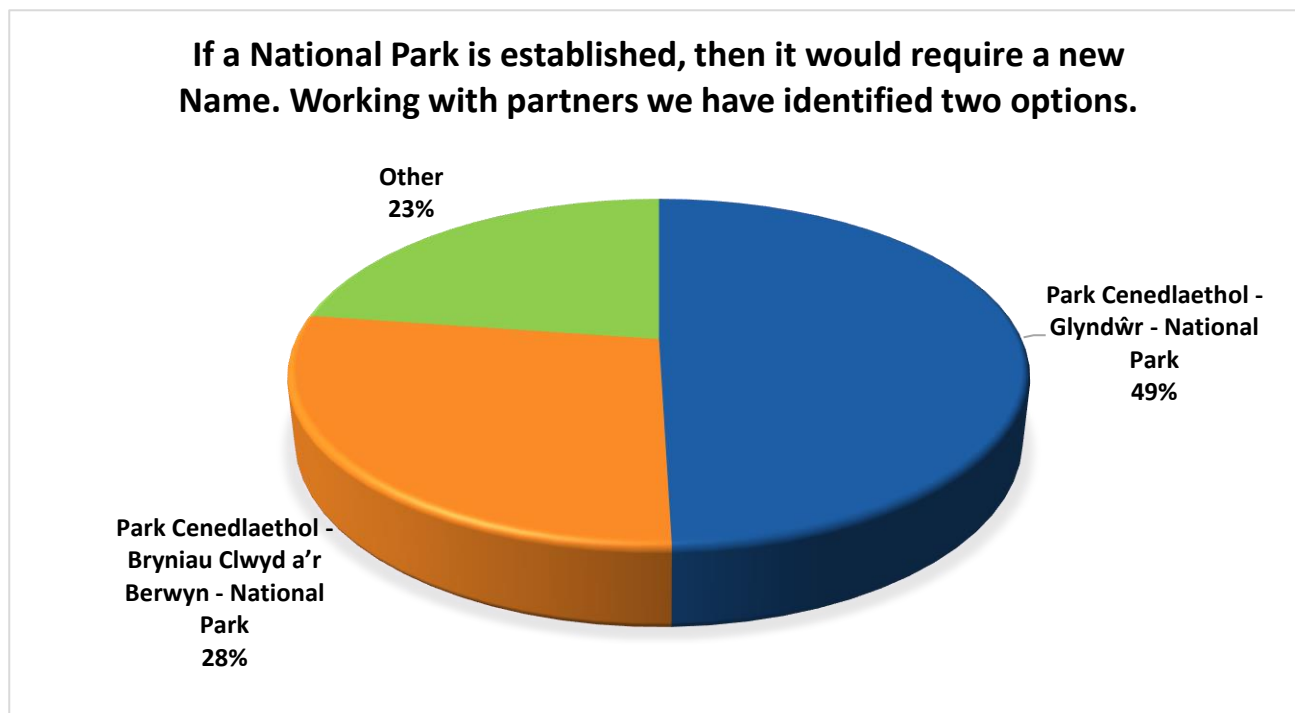


Figure 15: Exploring possible name options for the proposed National Park

Respondents were asked to select one of the two options or indicate that they wished to choose an alternative. 1,528 out of the 1,911 questionnaire responses answered this question. 49.5% (757) Park Cenedlaethol - Glyndŵr - National Park, 27.8% (424) Park Cenedlaethol - Bryniau Clwyd a'r Berwyn - National Park, 22.7% (347) Other.

The second part of the question allowed the respondents to suggest another name and/or to give a short justification for their answer. Within the 'other' section of the question, respondents were given the option to suggest an alternative name, and to write a justification for their selection. This option was available for any respondent, whether they had selected one of the two proposed names, or had selected their own. There were 562 responses to this option. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

OTHER NAME

88 respondents (15.7%) suggested 'other names' which included "*Parc Genedlaethol Clwyd National Park*", "*Bryniau Clwyd*" and "*Clwydian National Park*". No alternative name rose to the surface from the abundance of different suggestions received.

OTHER REASON

71 respondents (12.6%) provided other reasons. Most who did not suggest a name, suggested there should be no name, implying that they did not want a new National Park; for example saying, *“name not needed, leave it as it is”* and *“I don’t want my home to be in a National Park”*. Some felt they would not like to choose a name, for example, *“none! It takes away focus from the places within it”* and *“rather not choose a name, as this suggests I am in favour of a National Park”*. Others pointed out potential historical concerns, for example, *“both Clwyd and Glyndwr have association with disbanded/replaced local government authorities”*. Some were concerned about changed names, commenting *“Snowdonia name change, and others have made Wales a laughing stock”*.

HISTORICAL / CULTURAL IMPORTANCE

50 respondents (8.9%) mentioned ‘historical and cultural importance’. All of the respondents who suggested Glyndŵr outlined the cultural and historical significance of the name and its heritage, for example, *“Glyndŵr has a historic leaning”*. Others felt that calling a National Park Glyndŵr might “dilute the legend of Glyndŵr” and feared the *“name has too many nationalist connotations”*, whilst others felt the name was *“not well known outside of Wales”*. Many who chose Bryniau Clwyd a’r Berwyn felt that despite the historical significance of Glyndŵr, the name of a new National Park should reflect the area of the National Park and not a historical character.

EASE OF PRONUNCIATION

30 respondents (5.3%) wanted ‘ease of pronunciation’. Respondents mainly felt that, as the majority of visitors would probably speak English, it would be sensible to use a name which English speakers may be able to pronounce. Some commented *“Glyndŵr is short, memorable, easy to pronounce for non-Welsh speakers, and also the name of an existing walking route within Wales”*.

EASY TO REMEMBER

22 respondents (3.9%) wanted the name to be ‘easy to remember’. Most felt any new name should be *“catchy”*, some saying they *“like the reference to either Clwyd or Glyndŵr”* but feel *“simplicity is the key”*.

LENGTH OF THE NAME

20 respondents (3.6%) commented on the length of the name. All respondents felt the name for a National Park should be *“short”* and *“memorable”*. Some saying *“a short name that will resonate with a wide audience”* is needed. Those who chose ‘Other’, said *“a short clear name is needed. Glyndŵr is too vague, Bryniau Clwyd a’r Berwyn too vague”* some suggested *“Parc Cenedlaethol Clwyd is good enough”*.

GEOGRAPHICAL

20 respondents (3.6%) made geographical comments. Of the respondents who selected Bryniau Clwyd a’r Berwyn, they all explained that this best described the area, providing a geographical reference, for example *“describes the geography”* and *“the geographical oriented name is far better and evokes memories of mountains and valleys. Wonderful!”*. Respondents who did not select one of the two choices explained that the names did not cover enough of the proposed National Park

area; some noting *“Clwyd/Berwyn doesn't cover the whole areas. Clwyd should not be perpetuated. Glyndŵr is better but mainly identified with Dee Valley/ Llansilin areas”*.

OTHER RESPONSES

39 responses (6.9%) contained information or feelings which did not relate to the question. Most were concerned about the establishment of a new National Park, for example, *“don't need a name as it doesn't need to happen”* and *“leave the area alone and concentrate on the already approved National Parks”* as echoed within other questions.

PROCESS

36 respondents (6.4%) commented on the process being undertaken. Responses were concerned that the decision had already been made, many stating that it *“sounds like the decision has already been made to have a National Park if the names have already been thought about”*. Some questioned why a name was being considered when the proposal for a new National Park is only in consultation *“why consider a name on proposal stage?”*. Others, as with previous questions, passed comment on the questions *‘who has written this skewed questionnaire?’*

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

196 respondents (34.9%) again voiced *“no to the National Park”*. These responses followed the same thread as previous section, for example *“does Wales really have to have another National Park?”* and *“there should be no new National Park”*. Others refused to comment on a name, noting *“I'm not suggesting a name as I don't want a park”* and *“it is not wanted or needed so does not need a name”*.

QUESTION 6:

ARE THERE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WISH TO ADD ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A NEW NATIONAL PARK?

There were 870 responses to Question 6. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

FUNDING / COSTS

264 respondents (30.3%) mentioned funding and costs. Many questioned how much the project has costed up until this point, and how much it may cost in the future. Respondents also voiced if they were supportive or concerned about the costs, some saying *“we are not in favour of all the costs involved in these plans”*. Some wanted to know how much the National Park might cost in the future to maintain it and where the funds might come from. Others questioned whether this was an appropriate use of funds; commenting *“Another waste of taxpayers cash”* and stating *“it would be a financial burden on Welsh Assembly Government and local county councils who are already cutting down on their future spending and getting rid of services to rural communities”*. A few were concerned that the other National Parks and visitor attractions within Wales are already experiencing cuts to their funding *“the 3 existing National Parks are nearly bankrupt. Fund them properly before this proposal is considered”*. Suggestions were made about where these funds could alternatively be used; *“Please rethink this ridiculous idea and spend the money on hospital, Roads, School, then if there is any money left, use that on your existing parks”*. Comments were

made about the level of information provided during the process, related to funding; *“there is a vacuum of information about what it means to be a National Parks in general”*. Others commented that the funding would be beneficial to any new National Park; *“the evidence is clear that the three existing Welsh National Parks deliver great value to Wales and also the evaluated area is a distinctive and culturally significant area which can connect more communities to the landscape, enhance and improve the rural economy, and advance the wellbeing and climate ambitions of Welsh Government”*.

INFRASTRUCTURE

172 respondents (19.8%) mentioned ‘infrastructure’. Respondents were concerned about the condition of the present infrastructure within the National Park’s proposed draft boundary. Similar comments were previously raised in Questions 3b, 4a and 5d; these included issues around roads, parking, toilets, public services and public transport. Respondents made suggestions based on their experience of the infrastructure in other UK National Parks, about how things could be learnt and improved upon with a National Park. Some suggested *“we must learn from other National Park like the Peak District that has a really good cycle paths and a much better footpath management than we presently have in North Wales. Rarely do I find a blocked footpath in the area”*. Others commented about where this should sit on a list of national / regional priorities; some noted they were *“very worried about funding”* and that *“the money is desperately needed by Education, social services and health before leisure”*.

SUPPORT

126 respondents (14.5%) emphasised their support with all responses saying they were in favour of the proposed new National Park. Responses ranged from simple confirmations; such as *“I fully support the proposal”*, to more in depth confirmations of support; *“generally supportive and think it will enhance and protect the area for future enjoyment and sustainability”*, those thinking *“it would be wonderful to have this area as a new National Park”* and *“it would be a proud day for Wales and the UK as a whole”*. Others, whilst expressing support, also said they still had some concerns; for example, *“in principle I think it is a good idea, but I still have concerns regarding the road infrastructure in the whole area, particularly the Southern area”*.

TOURISM

106 respondents (12.2%) commented on ‘tourism’. Most were concerned about a National Park increasing tourism in the area; noting *“the area already has sufficient tourism”*, *“the landscape is already being conserved by farmers”* and *“the roads around the area will not cope with additional traffic”*. Some also felt *“a justification of increased tourism will not provide the type of jobs and opportunities that are actually needed across the area”* going on to say *“tourism jobs are seasonal, low paid and do not provide the financial stability to enable local people to meet the cost of living in the area”*. Others felt happy to encourage tourism, but most emphasised that whilst they were *“in favour”*, *“the encouragement of tourism should be very low-key and in sympathy with the quiet environment”*. Respondents put forward supportive and encouraging views such as *“it will have significant environmental and economic benefits for NE Wales, provided it is adequately funded”*. Emphasis was also placed on the *“large numbers of visitors”* who *“already visit this area and require appropriate management which the new National Park will be better able to manage than the current system”*.

LOCAL COMMUNITY / ECONOMY

87 respondents (10%) commented on the 'local community / economy'. Respondents raised thoughts about the impact a new National Park may have on the local community and local economy within the area. Similar comments to Question 3b were raised; these included, amongst others, the impacts on house prices, property availability, access to services, types of employment, retention of young people in the area, impacts on Welsh language communities and impacts on the rural way of life. Similarly to previous comments about the local community, views were split, with some raising concerns about the effect on the local community. Negative feelings were about the potential impact on farming and local communities within it. Some saying, *"farming is struggling, this will destroy communities"* and *"it will be unacceptably limiting on the future use of the area, including relating to economic development"*. Others felt the proposed National Park is *"a great idea"* and *"the larger the role played by government in protecting landscapes, wildlife and safeguarding the economic interests of local communities the better"* and thought it *"could improve appreciation for and prosperity in the area"*.

BUREAUCRACY

68 respondents (8%) commented on 'bureaucracy'. Respondents raised thoughts about how any change in governance may affect them and the area. Planning was a key sub-theme, with almost half of the responses raising questions about it. Some suggested *"the new planning body must fully recognise both the biodiversity and climate crises from the outset and have policies for their reduction, mitigation and adaptation"*. Others raised concerns about the effect any new planning laws / restrictions incumbent on a National Park resident may have *"it is difficult enough to make a living without increased bureaucracy"*. A few felt the introduction of another authority may be an *"unnecessary layer of governance"* and emphasised *"the existing Local planning authorities have sufficient powers to control the matters of concern"*. Most said they would like to see local control, in particular *"more local involvement on the board - no south Wales political appointments"*.

HERITAGE / CULTURE

47 respondents (5.4%) mentioned 'heritage and culture'. Most were supportive; with many saying *"the National Park should be welcomed as an opportunity to protect the landscape and heritage of the area and give opportunity to enhance the local economy"*. Some said *"please make it happen. It's good for the National identity, cultural significance, and wildlife protection of Wales and provides greater access and recreation opportunities to that area"*. Respondents commented on the area and language of the region; commenting *"the proposed new National Park incorporates most of the historic homeland of Glyndŵr and so is fundamental to the history of Wales as a Nation"*, and suggested that a new National Park might help *"Welsh language kept strong and housing kept for locals at a reasonable price....get that in statute"*. Others emphasised that the area's heritage was the main reason for them moving there *"I moved to Llangollen from England, for the wonderful countryside, history and walks"*.

LEAVE THE AREA AS IT IS

30 respondents (3.5%) asked to 'leave the area as it is'; noting, *"If it isn't broken don't fix it"* and emphasising *"we don't want it to change"*.

INCLUDE OTHER AREAS

19 respondents (2.2%) asked to 'include other areas' in the proposed National Park. The areas mentioned were the same as the responses considered in Questions 5b, 5c and 5d, including Mynydd Mynyllod, Hope Mountain, Halkyn Mountain, the Upper Dee Valley and Gronant Dunes, amongst others. Some cautioned that *"if this is going ahead then you must consider adding other areas to the Park - it will be difficult to add after the decision is made"*.

ACCESSIBILITY

10 respondents (1.1%) commented on 'accessibility'. Similar comments were touched on in Questions 3b, 4a and 4b; Respondents noted that *"there must be parking and accessibility to all users"* as well as *"reopen and protect public rights of way"*. Some questioned *"how can it be right that where you live, inside or outside a National Park determines the quality of and maintenance of footpaths"*. Others felt *"the formation of a new National Park will help to enhance access to the area"*.

OTHER RESPONSES

157 responses (18%) contained information or feelings which did not relate to the question. Most of these responses are echoed within other questions. These include the respondents views related to impacts on local people, *"the impacts on local people are only negative"*, comments about a name for the park, *"it needs to be easily pronounceable in English if you want visitors"*, as well as requests to stop developments, *"please stop the proposed wind farm"* and emphasis on the *"other ways for sustainable energy that don't spoil our natural resources"*.

PROCESS

69 respondents (7.9%) commented again on the 'process' being undertaken. These comments covered the same concerns raised in earlier questions. These include requests for more information, *"more information on costings would be useful e.g. cost/benefit analysis of info on existing National Park's"*, concerns about the process moving forward, *"actually listen to consultation responses and respond"*. As well as concerns about the questionnaire, *"this questionnaire is very manipulative and poorly written"*.

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

255 respondents (29.3%) once again took this as an opportunity to comment *"no to the National Park"*. Many rejected the concept, some with reasons, but often without. Some simply stated they *"do not agree"* nor *"consent to a new National Park"* and referred to particular areas such as north Montgomeryshire and Ceiriog Valley. Others provided reasons such as *"the whole area would be devastated by a surge of tourists and locals would suffer from this"* as well as *"Llanrhaeadr has massive problems re traffic and lack of input to the village"*. Young people in the area were concerned that this would *"drive me away from the area"*. Others, particularly in Powys were concerned that *"Powys County Council faces severe funding problems"* noting the *"leisure centres are under threat because a lack of money"*.

4. QUESTIONNAIRE PART 4 – WELSH LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

QUESTION 8:

WHAT IS YOUR WELSH LANGUAGE ABILITY?

- ABLE TO SPEAK WELSH FLUENTLY
- ABLE TO UNDERSTAND AND SPEAK SOME WELSH
- NO UNDERSTANDING OF WELSH
- LEARNING WELSH

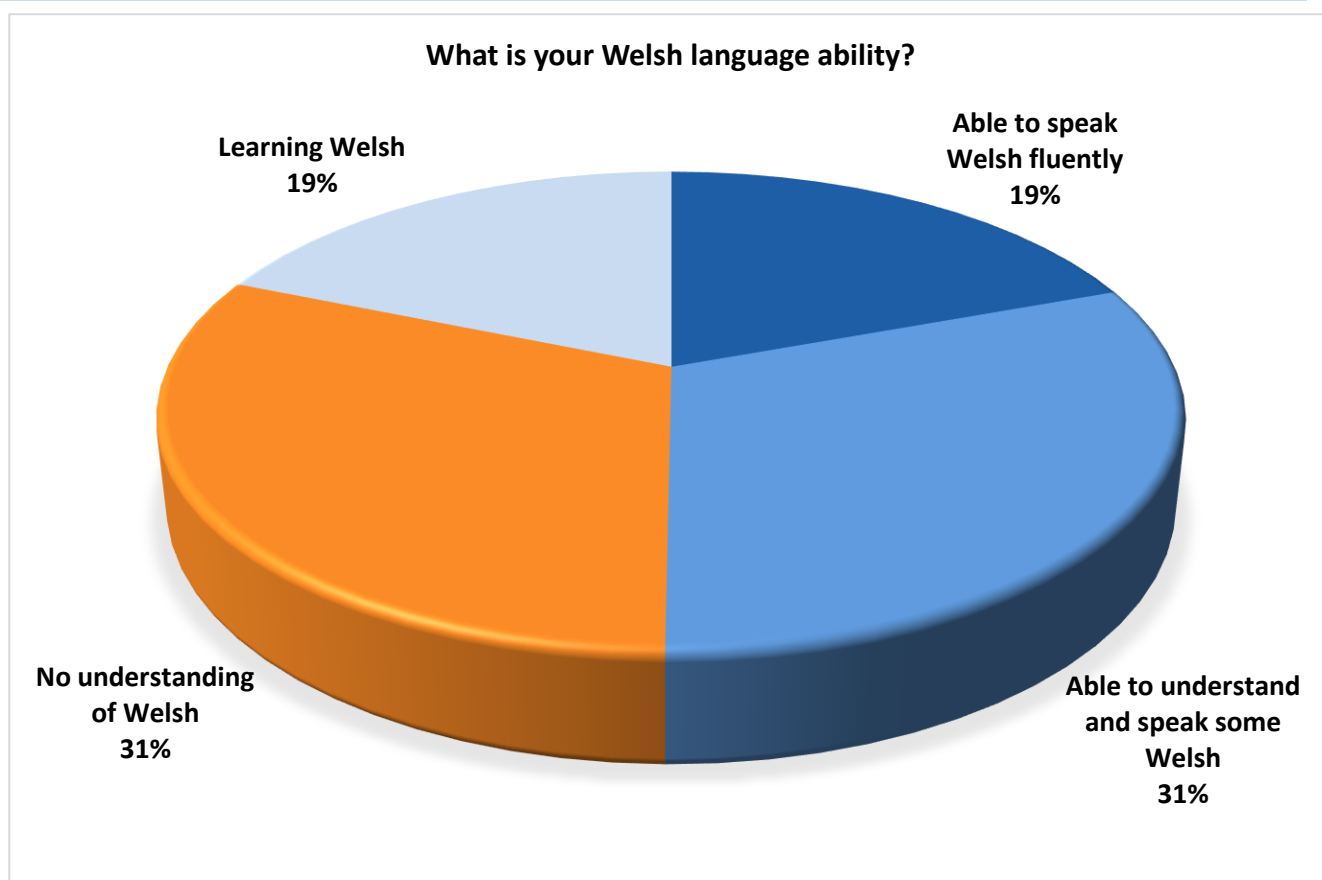


Figure 16: Respondents' Welsh language ability

1,834 out of the 1,911 questionnaire respondents answered Question 8. 19% (356) said they were 'able to speak Welsh fluently', 31% (564) were 'able to understand and speak some Welsh', 19% (344) 'learning Welsh', and 31% (570) had 'no understanding of Welsh'.

QUESTION 9:

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW YOUR VIEWS ON THE EFFECTS OF THIS PROPOSAL MIGHT HAVE ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE, AS FOLLOWS:

- OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO USE WELSH LANGUAGE
- TREATING THE WELSH LANGUAGE, NO LESS FAVOURABLY THAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

WHAT EFFECTS DO YOU THINK THERE WOULD BE? HOW COULD POSITIVE EFFECTS BE INCREASED, OR NEGATIVE EFFECTS BE MITIGATED?

1,126 out of 1,911 questionnaire respondents answered Question 9. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

PROMOTE WELSH LANGUAGE / HERITAGE / CULTURE

278 respondents (24.7%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to the 'promotion of the language, heritage and culture'. Almost all respondents felt there would be a positive effect on the Welsh language from the effects of promotion of the language, heritage and culture of the National Park's proposed draft boundary. Many felt it would *"have a positive effects as it will encourage visitors to the area"* and *"provide opportunities to expose them to the language as well as other elements of Welsh culture"*. Some suggested that *"positive effects could be enhanced through the development of visitor attractions that showcase the history and culture of the area and, of course, its language"*. There was a strong feeling that *"visitors should be informed about local Welsh history and provided with an opportunity to learn some basic Welsh words"* and that *"the increased exposure to the Welsh language for non-Welsh speakers provided by the new National Park can only be positive"*. Others felt the Welsh language does not need a National Park to promote it, commenting *"people already have plenty of opportunities to speak Welsh. Welsh language is highly visible heard and well promoted. It doesn't need a National Park to help it"*.

GENERAL NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

201 respondents (17.9%) felt a National Park would have a 'general negative effect on the Welsh language'. Many provided short answers like *"only negative impact"*, it is *"not likely to help the use of the Welsh language"*, *"mental health negatively affected"*, *"not likely to help the use of the Welsh language"*, *"the proposal can only have negative effects"*, and *"all negative, impact on the local culture and community"*. Some were very concerned that a National Park would *"destroy the Welsh language in the area"*, *"those visiting often do not appreciate the importance of the language and heritage of Wales"*, and would have the *"potential for negative effects if too much emphasis is put on facilitating tourism"*.

HOUSING

172 respondents (15.3%) felt there would be a negative effect on the Welsh language due to changes in 'housing' availability, costs and uses.

- **HOLIDAY / SECOND HOMES**

Respondents felt there could be an increase in the amount of housing stock purchased to be used as holiday or second homes for people from outside of the area, with any decrease in the availability of housing, or any increase in house prices due to any decrease in availability, leading

to people from the local area finding it difficult to find housing in areas they were brought up in. Close proximity to the English border would likely mean *“more non-Welsh speakers may come to the area”* and *“buy second homes”*, leading to an *“increase in house prices”* and potentially *“fluent Welsh speaking children will look elsewhere to have their own family”*. All this could *“destroy Welsh speaking communities and schools”*.

- **HOUSING COSTS**

Respondents felt there could be an increase in house prices, should the area become a National Park. Respondents repeatedly quoted that house prices could be as much as 25% higher within a National Park than outside it; for example *“house prices in a National Park is 25% higher so the young will be driven out and the Welsh language lost!”* and those saying they *“would expect negative impacts on Welsh language due to local Welsh speakers being priced out of local housing market and being displaced by older non-Welsh retired people”*.

- **HOUSING ISSUES**

Respondents felt there could be an increase in properties used as airbnbs which, in turn, could see a decrease in the availability for local housing stock, commenting *“the properties will be used as holiday lets and air b and b’s”*. Others felt there may be a need for controls on property use; for example, suggested *“we need to put controls on 2nd homes and holiday rentals”*. Some suggested mitigating these issues; *“if these effects are to be mitigated then local housing support must be considered and strict restrictions placed on the establishment of holiday lets and Airbnb and holiday homes and applications to change existing homes into businesses”*.

BILINGUAL SIGNAGE / INFORMATION

151 respondents (13.4%) felt there would be a positive effect on the Welsh language due to the use of ‘bilingual signage and information’. A repeated feeling from respondents was that *“bilingual signage and interpretative boards throughout the Park would strengthen the pride of the native people for their natural home and provide them with the language to celebrate it”*. Many also commented that Welsh place names are a *“fascinating way to engage people”* and *“encourage people to learn Welsh”*. Some said it makes people want to *“know what the place names mean”* and suggested *“an English translation alongside the Welsh would be a good engagement point”*. Most felt a National Park is *“an opportunity for further development of the Welsh language”* saying *“it gives us an opportunity to publicize our unique Welsh language”* and suggested *“we could even develop another Welsh language Centre such as the one on the Llŷn”*. Most also felt *“it will be important to continue to encourage those working for the National Park to be bilingual and showing a commitment to learning”*.

GENERAL POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

144 respondents (12.8%) felt a National Park would have *“a positive effect on the Welsh language”*. Many responses gave short answers such as *“positive”*, *“it could encourage greater use of Welsh”*, *“positive effects in Welsh national identity”*, *“hopefully encourage more Welsh speaking”*, and *“it will preserve it”*. Others gave more detail of the positive effects such as a National Park would increase positive effects by *“exposing more people”* to and *“raising awareness”* of the Welsh language and culture which would help *“preserve it”*. Some suggested the positive effects could be increased by *“encouraging all hospitality and tourist businesses to promote their products in Welsh as well as English”* and employ *“customer facing Welsh speaking staff where possible”*.

WELSH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

121 respondents (10.8%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to 'Welsh language education'. Many felt strongly that the Welsh language should be *"taught", "compulsory", "used", "celebrated"* and in all schools across Wales, whilst others expressed concern that *"not all Welsh-born people speak Welsh"* and so an *"overly strident focus on 'Welshness' could be discriminatory and irksomely political"*. Some highlighted the difficulties in boosting Welsh language education, commenting they *"don't imagine there would suddenly be a rush for none-Welsh speaking locals to learn Welsh"* as a consequence of the close *"proximity of some parts of the proposed park to the border"* and so *"where Welsh learning has been resisted, it will remain a very English speaking only area"*.

TOURISM

118 respondent (10.5%) felt there would be both a positive and negative effect on the Welsh language due to 'tourism'. Those who felt negatively suggested *"an influx of visitors likely would be detrimental"* as the *"majority of increased visitor numbers would be English speaking"* therefore increasing the demand and provision of English services. Concerns that the *"signage will be provided in English when the focus should be on Welsh only signs, Welsh only place names"*. Respondents who felt positive explained this could be *"an opportunity for the Welsh Language to be introduced to more visitors"* and an opportunity to *"explain the derivation of Welsh names on signs which is often seen as very interesting to non-Welsh speakers"*. Those looking at both sides felt that whilst there is a *"danger"* that the influx of visitors could have a *"detrimental effect on the Welsh Language"* and the *"coherence of communities"* there are *"big opportunities"* to promote the use of Welsh and importance to the culture and landscape.

LOCAL COMMUNITY / ECONOMY

118 respondents (10.5%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to the 'local community / economy', or changes within it. Respondents saw both positive and negative effects. Some saying, *"it will enable positive effects for the Welsh language as there will be more pride in the area as a new National Park for generations to come"*. Others felt *"encouraging tourism from England and further afield is only going to have a negative effect on opportunities to speak the Welsh language. It could potentially drive some native Welsh speakers out of the area"*. Whilst speaking on the same point some believed *"it might stop people moving out of the area and also provide jobs for younger people, so they stay in Wales"*.

IMPACT OF SPOKEN ENGLISH

89 respondents (7.9%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to the 'impact of spoken English' within the area. Most saw both positive and negative impacts on the Welsh language. Those who thought there would be negative impacts said *"negative effects. The visitors will be mainly English, the main populations are large English Cities only an hour away from the proposed boundary. Therefore, the language used will be predominantly English, this then leads to the watering down and less Welsh language in use"* whilst those who felt more positive said the *"National Park status could help provide new opportunities to protect the Welsh language"*. Others felt there would be *"no effect"* on the Welsh language at all, commenting *"there will be an influx of English speaking visitors who should be welcomed. There is no reason however why the Welsh*

language should be affected” and “none. The park would have no effect on the use or proliferation of the Welsh language within the proposed boundaries”.

INFRASTRUCTURE

60 respondents (5.3%) felt there would be a negative effect on the Welsh language due to the area’s infrastructure. The concerns raised about infrastructure were similar to those raised before, these include traffic, parking, schools, emergency services, local services, for example, *“overcrowding on roads, extra pressure on emergency services”* and the *“negative effects around tourism spots like this are always related to parking”*. Whilst there has been no direct correlation between the standard of the infrastructure in the area and what impact this may have on Welsh speaking, it is worth considering one respondent who said *“looking forward to cursing walkers in Welsh for parking inconsiderately, letting their dogs off lead and their inability/unpreparedness to reverse on narrow roads”*.

OTHER RESPONSES

270 responses (24%) contained information or feelings which did not relate to this question. Most responses echoed what was said within answers to other questions, such as *“National Parks provide excellent outdoor spaces for recreation”* and *“the positive effect they have on people's health, both physical and mental, is huge”*. Others included *“ensure farmers understand how to work with the SFS”* and *“we have seen how it has already failed the areas that are already National Parks”*. Many did not have a view either way, for example *“not bothered about this”* and *“neutral”*.

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

24 respondents (2.1%) once again commented *“no to the National Park”*. Many simply reject the concept of a National Park, some with reasons, others without. Reasons given included *“there must not be a National Park”*, and *“a National Park is not needed or wanted in any language”*. These responses cannot be seen as answering the question posed within Question 9. Others responded to the question within their comments about not wanting a new National Park, for example *“no to National Park. We need affordable housing for local Welsh speaking families”* and *“won't have any impact since it will be Saesneg [English] people coming here anyway to visit the new National Park. Just scrap this idea before it is too late”*.

PROCESS

22 respondents (2%) once again raised concerns about the ‘process’ currently being undertaken which included asking for more information, *“reserve comments until EIA and Welsh Language Impact Assessments are published”*, the consultation process, *“without proper consultation we are being kept in the dark”*, questioning the questions, *“this question does not make sense how can a National Parks improve any language?”* As well as expressing concerns that the decision may already have been made, *“you clearly think that it may affect the Welsh language”*.

QUESTION 10:

PLEASE ALSO EXPLAIN HOW YOU BELIEVE THIS PROPOSAL COULD BE FORMULATED OR CHANGED TO HAVE:

- POSITIVE EFFECTS OR INCREASED POSITIVE EFFECTS ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO USE THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND ON TREATING THE WELSH LANGUAGE NO LESS FAVOURABLY THAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- NO ADVERSE EFFECTS ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO USE THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND ON TREATING THE WELSH LANGUAGE NO LESS FAVOURABLY THAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

755 respondents answered Question 10, however, it is clear the intention of the question was not understood by the majority of the respondents. Some simply said “*positive effects*”, “*no adverse effects*”, whilst others gave fuller answers, such as “*there will be NO positive effects on the Welsh language, in fact, it would be quite the reverse*” as “*a new National Park would have a detrimental effect on the Welsh language*”, and “*positive effects as we’re starting to value what we have. Tourism is massive, so this will only help it further. Well done*”. Most repeated answers similar to those of Question 9, rather than suggesting how the proposal could be changed to have either positive, or no adverse, effects for the Welsh language. The answers have been carefully analysed and themed in order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

PROMOTE WELSH LANGUAGE / HERITAGE / CULTURE

134 respondents (17.8%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to the promotion of the Welsh language, heritage and culture. Almost all of these respondents felt there would be a positive effect on the Welsh language from the effects of promotion of the Welsh language, the Welsh heritage and the Welsh culture of the proposed area. Many pointing out how rich a culture and language Welsh is, for example “*visitors love the fact that Welsh is in abundance in our rural setting’ and Visitors really enjoy hearing Welsh being spoken*”. Some pointed out that “*the visibility of Cymraeg would give those of us who speak some Cymraeg, more confidence in using it*” and in turn, that “*would encourage visitors to enquire about the language (& hopefully the history)*”. Others felt it would be advantageous to employ Welsh speakers “*staff to be able to speak Welsh to treat the language as equal*” and “*ensure staff have at least some understanding of the Welsh language who work in cafes, restaurants, shop*”.

BILINGUAL SIGNAGE / INFORMATION

119 respondents (15.8%) felt there would be a positive effect on the Welsh language due to the use of “*bilingual signage and information*”. Some respondents only expressed that they would like signage to be bilingual, for example, “*use bilingual signage*” and “*the obvious answer of having all signs in dual language*”. Others felt this should go further, with “*bilingual staff, signs, interpretation etc. Initiatives to build on the Welsh we have here already*”, “*road signs and bilingual information boards with local shops as well*”. Some felt strongly that staff within the National Park should be bilingual, for example, “*a bi-lingual policy for all physical resources from staff to signage*” others felt there should be opportunities to learn, “*rangers should be able to speak Welsh or be allowed Welsh language training*”.

GENERAL NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

86 respondents (11.4%) felt a National Park would have a negative effect on the Welsh language. There were many short, unexplained responses, concerned that *“there are no positive effects”*, and that there *“will be less and less Welsh spoken”*. Others explained their feelings, *“this area will be overrun with visitors - diluting the Welsh language”* and *“less Welsh speaking is inevitable as a new National Park will not draw Welsh speakers to our area”*. One of the main areas of concern was the potential for dilution of the language, many believing *“it would just dilute the use of the Welsh language even more”* and be *“negative for Welsh language because it would bring more English speaking to live in the area”*.

WELSH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

53 respondents (7%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to Welsh language education. Respondents felt *“there will be a need to educate visitors and non-Welsh speakers!”* others felt it would provide *“a bridge for Welsh learners and an opportunity for international visitors to encounter different languages side-by-side”*. Some also felt bilingual signage *“could actively encourage people to learn the Welsh language through Welsh names and places within the park boundary”*. Others felt the *“wide use of the Welsh language could raise its profile and encourage new learners”*. Some were concerned that *“to improve the languages you need to invest in the schools which are closing and financially struggling”*. Others felt *“surely schools are for learning and outdoors is for visiting”*.

GENERAL POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE

52 respondents (6.9%) felt a new National Park would have *“a positive effect on the Welsh language”*. Many responses gave short answers such as *“positive effects”* and *“no adverse effects”*. Others provided more insight into the respondents' thoughts, for example *“National Park = National Asset. A positive answer to many of the nation's ills”* and *“it could, possibly encourage more people to be aware of Welsh culture and language”*. Some urged for *“a plan”* to be made as it *“would ensure that there are no negative impacts for the Welsh language and that it is not treated less favourably”*.

HOUSING

48 respondents (6.4%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to changes in housing availability, costs and uses. The responses follow the same sub-themes as previous sections; cost of housing, *“Welsh language would disappear due to the influx of rich foreigners who could afford the properties”*, holiday homes and Airbnb *“there is a high risk that National Park designation will push up house prices by attracting second homers/ people purchasing houses for Airbnb rental”* and the potential loss of young Welsh speakers from the area, *“this will drive the young local Welsh speaking people out of the area”*.

IMPACT OF SPOKEN ENGLISH

42 respondents (5.6%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to the 'impact of spoken English' within the area. Following the responses to previous questions, respondents saw both positive and negative impacts on the Welsh language. Those who felt there would be no impact saw opportunities, for example, *“friendly communication is important”* with visitors, *“willing*

to glean an understanding and learn a few words of Welsh". Some felt *"English is a universal language spoken by majority of visitors"* and National Parks are about visitors. Others felt negatively, *"how are more people coming from outside Wales ever going to strengthen our language opportunities?"*.

LOCAL COMMUNITY / ECONOMY

31 respondents (4.1%) felt there would be an effect on the Welsh language due to the local community / economy, or changes within it. In line with responses to previous questions, respondents saw both positive and negative effects on the local communities and economy, for example, *"integration of all people's cultures should be encouraged. Living in isolated communities is damaging"*, and *"Welsh language would take another blow as most tourists would come from across the border"*. Others could not see why there should be any effect, *"a National Park should not affect the progress of maintaining the Welsh language as it is spoken in my village"*.

TOURISM

22 respondent (2.9%) felt, in line with previous questions, there would be both a positive and negative effect on the Welsh language due to tourism. Those who felt negatively suggested *"the whole area would be devastated by a surge of tourists and locals would suffer from this"*, while those who felt positive included *"increased tourism leads to an opportunity to promote culture and language"*. Others felt *"visitors really enjoy hearing Welsh being spoken"* although pragmatically acknowledging *"visitors to the area aren't going to learn Welsh for a day"*.

INFRASTRUCTURE

12 respondents (1.6%) raised concerns about the area's infrastructure, with the main focus once again on parking and traffic, for example *"Llanrhaeadr has massive problems re traffic"* and *"our roads are not suitable for all increased numbers of tourists"*. Others urged NRW to *"discuss parking with villagers concerned"*. A Park and Ride was commented upon, with its inherent problems, *"NRW suggested maybe a park and ride - it's impossible to get a bus up to Pistyll Rhaeadr and nowhere to turn around"*.

OTHER / CHANGE IN THE USE OF WELSH

171 respondents (22.7%) contained information or feelings which did not relate to this question. Many of these were short comments, for instance, *"forgetting it"*, and respondents who *"don't feel qualified to comment"*. Some commented about a potential impact a National Park may have, *"I don't think having more tourists will have an effect on the Welsh language"* and conversely, some who *"fail to see how bringing more non Welsh speakers in our area can provide opportunities for Welsh?"*. Mainly these responses followed the same lines as those to previous questions.

PROCESS

Once again, 20 respondents (2.7%) raised similar concerns about the process currently being undertaken as made to previous questions. Some called for more policies, for example *"create a language policy in due course"*. Others were concerned about the questionnaire questions and public consultation, noting they *"can barely understand the question!"* and that *"many residents are feeling unheard and or their views ignored"*.

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

Once again, as heavily emphasised throughout all of the questionnaire answers, 24 respondents (2.1%) commented “*no to the National Park*” and “*stop the new National Park*”. Many simply reject the concept of a National Park, some with reasons, others without. Reasons given included “*just support farmers to continue to do their good job with the land*” and those who “*like it the way it is*”, “*less holiday homes and more people living year-round in the homes in the area*”. Most responses categorised here follow the same pattern as the views opposing a National Park expressed in previous questions.

Although some of the responses to this question do suggest forms of mitigation or methods of promotion, they do not answer the question asking how the proposal could be changed to have either positive, or no adverse, effects for the Welsh language.

4.2 Emailed responses received directly by NRW

As well as the 1,911 questionnaire responses received, a further 58 responses were received by NRW directly from the respondents. These responses were from a mixture of respondents, including private individuals, large commercial organisations and local authorities. The responses did not follow the same process or sequence of questions as the questionnaire, as such the responses cannot be analysed in quite the same way as the previous sections, however the responses contain the same general themes. Some of the responses were highly detailed and contained multiple themes within each response. Where these themes are different, despite being within the same theme they have been categorised as different responses to allow full analysis of each response. The emailed responses have been carefully analysed and themed from most mentioned to least mentioned.

DEVELOPMENT

48 sections within the emailed responses included topics which related to ‘development’. The main topic considered under development was an issue of planning. This is probably unsurprising when the fact that, amongst others, these responses were received from local authorities and councils, as well as major businesses within the ‘Green’ sector. Responses explained that residents were concerned that “*tighter planning controls are needed to protect the landscape*”. Responses pointed out that other Governments had committed to “*creating a “bespoke planning policy” for onshore wind projects*”. Others noted that there are already reports of “*difficulty in obtaining planning for small on farm renewable energy developments*”. Some referenced the need to develop green energy schemes or farming developments, how these could be accommodated in a National Park and what effect this may have, for example “*any new National Park designation could threaten the economic growth and social vitality that onshore wind would deliver*”.

COMMUNITY / LOCAL ECONOMY

42 sections within the emailed responses included topics which related to 'community / local economy'. Views were expressed which were both positive and negative related to the effect a National Park may have on the community and local economy. Positively, *"tourism offers economic opportunities"* and a *"National Park would contribute significantly to the local economy"*. Others negatively commented *"employment opportunities within the National Park will diminish except for low paying seasonal jobs"* and *"the mental health and wellbeing of many farming families is fragile, and the proposals have certainly created a further sense of anxiety in the agriculture community"*. Regarding the local economy, responses included *"it would create new jobs and support new and existing jobs of up to 120 posts"* and National Parks have *"potential contributions of around £500 million"*.

FUNDING / COSTS

39 sections within the emailed responses included topics which related to 'funding/costs'. Most comments, whether from local authorities, councils, businesses or individuals, questioned *"Welsh Government's finances to carry this out"*. Many highlighted that *"more information is needed on how the new National Park will be funded"* as *"it is not entirely clear from the consultation documents how the proposed National Park would be funded"*. Others emphasised the pressures local authority budgets are already under, explaining the *"Local Authorities within the proposed area each face significant budget shortfalls and need to find significant savings in the period ahead"*.

INFRASTRUCTURE

34 sections within the emailed responses included comments about 'infrastructure'. These follow the same themes as previous questions, raising concerns about roads, traffic levels, council services, parking and visitor facilities, to name a few. For example, those who *"have seen the decline in public toilets and closure of visitor centres"*, and *"parking problems, congestion on the local roads, litter and pollution leading to conflict with the local community"*. Some showed concern about the order of the proposal, explaining *"investment should be in the form of the infrastructure first then proposals such as this one"*. Others felt differently, *"robust plans are in place for infrastructure improvements, environmental protection, and economic sustainability"*.

AGRICULTURE & LAND MANAGEMENT

30 sections within the emailed responses included comments about 'agriculture and land management'. Views were expressed which were positive, for example, *"a National Park could provide improved and more customised support for the farming community"* and *"suggestions that National Park designation would restrict farming and bring more visitor pressures"* who went on to comment *"few of those fears have materialised to any significant extent"*. However, these views are in the minority, most being negative, for example, *"National Parks might introduce rules that complicate eligibility for agricultural subsidies"* and *"designation could impose additional restrictions on land use and development, jeopardizing their livelihoods"*. Others spoke of their experiences of

farming in other National Parks, explaining *“how well their staff there have built up good working relationships with farmers, or are farmers themselves and understand practical issues, are Welsh speaking, and supportive of the rural economy”*.

BUREAUCRACY

25 sections within the emailed responses included comments about ‘bureaucracy’. Comments predominantly related to the establishment of any new authority, what powers it would have and what level of democracy it would be subject to, for example, *“handing over of powers from the democratically elected local authorities to a Quasi Autonomous Non-governmental Organisation”*, likewise, *“the establishment of a National Park Authority could centralize decision-making and reduce local input”*. Planning authority was also raised in many of the responses, for example, *“National Parks are local authorities for the purposes of planning”* and *“there are concerns that there is a lack of skilled officers available to sustain a new Local Planning Authority”*. A general comment within the responses was that *“a new National Park would introduce another level of bureaucracy in the Region”* and *“we remain unconvinced of the cost-benefit of the additional layer of bureaucracy”*.

HOUSING

22 sections within the emailed responses included topics which related to ‘housing’. Responses followed the same themes as previous questions, including a potential increase in the price of housing, *“designation could lead to house price increases due to increased popularity and desirability”*, as well as a potential lack of affordable housing, *“impact on local affordable housing could also have a detrimental effect on the language and culture of the area”* and second homes and AirBnB’s, *“the designation of a National Park could lead to an increase in the number of second homes and short-term holiday lets”*.

CULTURE & HERITAGE

22 sections within the emailed responses included comments about the ‘culture and heritage’. Responses pointed to the National Park’s proposed draft boundary as being *“a place with cohesive communities and distinctive settlement patterns”* as well as *“a story of human interaction with the landscape over millennia”*. Others commented on the industrial heritage of the area, *“the industrial heritage in the region and the quarrying industry has shaped the landscape we see today”* and from the minerals industry, *“concerns are made with regards to such a designation on the impact on the same industry that has contributed to shaping the landscape in the region”*. Some felt *“a new National Park would do little to support or preserve our dispersed rural communities”*.

TOURISM

21 sections within the emailed responses included comments about ‘tourism’. Responses followed the same themes as seen in in previous question responses. For example, positively, *“tourism offers economic opportunities”*, *“villages and areas which can benefit from visitors to them”*, negatively, *“over-tourism is an issue of concern in parts of Gwynedd”*, *“the impact of poor visitor management creates a negative feeling for visitors”*. Some looked at both sides, *“visitors to rural Wales can bring welcome revenue to local economies, those who ignore the Countryside Code can also create substantial costs for farms and rural businesses”*.

ECOLOGY & HABITAT

20 sections within the emailed responses included comments about 'ecology and habitat'. Responses followed the same themes as seen in the previous questionnaire responses. For example, when looking at farming, *"farming activity supports a diverse range of species and habitats"*, the impact of increased tourism, *"over-tourism could harm fragile ecosystems, conflicting with the traditional ecological stewardship of farmers"*. Others raised concerns about the potential damage to the environment from an increase in tourism, *"a rise in visitor numbers could lead to environmental damage and indirect problems such as disturbance to sensitive species and habitats"*.

LANDSCAPE

18 sections within the emailed responses included comments about 'landscape'. Many spoke about farming and the landscape, how *"farming has shaped our protected landscapes"* as well as the SFS, which has the *"potential to support farmers within the local area to conserve, protect and enhance the landscape"*. Others described the landscape, as being *"a distinctive, complementary, and contrasting landscape"* and *"a landscape providing benefits beyond its borders"*. Some questioned the need for a National Park, *"people do not go to the hills because they have a national designation: they do so because of their intrinsic quality and natural surroundings"* likewise, *"if the majority of the countryside is under designation it would dilute the special nature of designated areas"*.

RECREATION

18 sections within the emailed responses included comments about 'recreation'. Many were supportive of recreation, for example, *"the potential for expanding recreation within the area would be greatly increased"* as well as *"endless recreational possibilities is surely deserving of your support"*. Others raised the question of 4x4 off roading, with views from both sides being expressed. Supportively, *"when I have time is pottering about in my land rover with the kids at the weekend on a few of the green lanes"* and in direct opposition, *"concerns about illegal off-roading"*. Respondents also commented on the possibility of the Gronant Dunes linking the Wales Coastal Path noting *"Gronant Dunes & Talacre provide an opportunity to include a notable section of the Wales Coast Path"*.

WILDLIFE

17 sections within the emailed responses included comments about 'wildlife'. Various different species were referred to including the Little Terns and Natterjack Toads which were identified as living in Gronant Dunes, *"home to the only breeding Little Tern colony in Wales"* as well as *"Natterjack Toads (believed to be their only site in Wales)"*. It was noted that Curlews are found on Mynydd Mynyllod, *"a vital conservation zone for these sorely endangered birds"*. Respondents commented *"preserving the stunning local landscape and wildlife is integral for future generations health & wellbeing"*.

SUPPORT

16 comments within the emailed responses expressed 'support' for the proposed National Park. Many said they were *"wholly supportive of the proposal in principle"*, and that they *"very much*

welcome”, and “wish to support this proposal”. Some wanted the proposal to move forward at pace, emphasising their desire for “the designation can be carried out before the next Senedd election”.

OTHER AREAS

13 comments within the emailed responses asked for ‘other areas’ to be included in the proposed National Park. The main request was for Gronant Dunes to be included, with 8 requests from the 13 responses emphasising “the ecological, environmental, social, cultural and economic value of Gronant Dunes & Talacre’s inclusion”. Other areas requested for inclusion were the Upper Dee Valley, Mynydd Mynyllod, Hope Mountain, Clwydog Valley, and Halkyn Mountain.

ACCESSIBILITY

16 comments within the emailed responses touched on ‘accessibility’. These responses followed the same themes as seen in the previous questionnaire responses. Responses asked for accessibility for a wide range of visitors, “efforts are needed to make these spaces more welcoming and accessible to a diverse range of visitors”. Others cautioned about the conflict between accessibility and trespass, “increasing incidents of trespassing being observed”.

OTHER

16 comments within the emailed responses touched on topics ‘other’ than those listed above. Some of these explained a need for renewable energy and how this could work within a National Park, “the integration of renewable energy into National Parks is not unprecedented”. Others asked that “renewable generation and grid infrastructure which contribute towards net zero are afforded ‘special infrastructure status’”. Some asked “to establishing a “healthier” and “more equal Wales”. Responses commented on the climate emergency, when talking about the “National Planning Framework (NPF4), which emphasises the climate emergency and support for renewable energy development”. Others felt it important to make sure EDI was considered in the proposed National Park, “action must be taken to help to tackle the inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes amongst the poorest in society”.

PROCESS

63 sections within the emailed responses included questions about the ‘process’ being undertaken. Responses followed the same lines as the questions about the process within other questions. For example, some questioned the information available, noting they were “concerned over the adequacy of the Special Qualities Report that NRW commissioned” when within the report it was commented “we were unable to conduct our own visual assessment” whilst others questioned “will the Park have clear and enforceable management plans”. Also, more reports were asked for, or needed, “it is not clear if a sustainability appraisal or economic impact assessment has been undertaken”. Other concerns were about the consultation events, noting that “unfortunately, the targeted landowners’ online session was withdrawn due to insufficient interest” and “it was disappointing to hear some anti-renewable development rhetoric from representatives at the public consultation in Llangollen”. Respondents called on the process to make sure it was following Welsh Government guidelines at all stages, for example, “we recommend that NRW incorporates

the Welsh Government's economic development goals into its advice to the Cabinet Secretary". Others commented that they "believe legislation underpinning the designation of National Parks is out of step with Wales's legislative framework".

NO TO THE NATIONAL PARK

21 sections within the emailed responses raised objections to the proposed National Park. Responses followed the same themes as seen in the previous questionnaire responses. Some were short statements, such as *"no to the National Park"* and *"I would like to register my opposition to this new park"* whilst others were longer, emphasising *"there are too many drawbacks and no obvious benefits to this proposal and it should be rejected"*. Others heavily objected to certain areas being included in the proposed National Park, for example, *"strongly disagree. Powys should be excluded from the boundary of the Proposed National Park"*. These responses followed the same thread as seen in previous questions.

5. Conclusion

NRW would like to thank all respondents and acknowledge all of the comments and the sometimes considerable time and effort that will have been spent in preparing contributions. We are currently undertaking analysis to explore all of the themes raised. The feedback from this consultation has been used to inform ongoing assessments and analysis including:

- A benefits for Nature Report
- An Economic Assessment
- A review of planning
- A Health Impact Assessment
- A Welsh Language Impact Assessment
- An Equalities impact assessment

We have also undertaken discussion with representatives of the renewable energy sector, Mining interests, Nature and conservation groups, Farming unions, Welsh Government and more. This has involved flagging issues for others to consider where appropriate and beyond the scope of NRW's assessment to resolve.

An important element of the 2024 public consultation was the Candidate Area Map and we received 655 comments in relation to the Candidate Area boundary. As a result we have undertaken a review of the Candidate Area Map in relation to the evidence provided by the Gillespie's landscape analysis, new information and stakeholder feedback provided during the consultation process plus additional site visits over the spring.

Although the core designation criteria must remain primary, we are taking into consideration feedback and evidence in order to reflect the variations in desirability of designation across different parts of the candidate area.

This is to try and ensure that any future designation provides the best possible fit for the needs of the area, enabling maximum potential benefit whilst minimising potential disbenefit for each locality as far as possible at this stage. As a result of this process we expect to see some further refinement to the draft boundary shared during the consultation, once finalised, and if approved, this will be shared later in 2025.

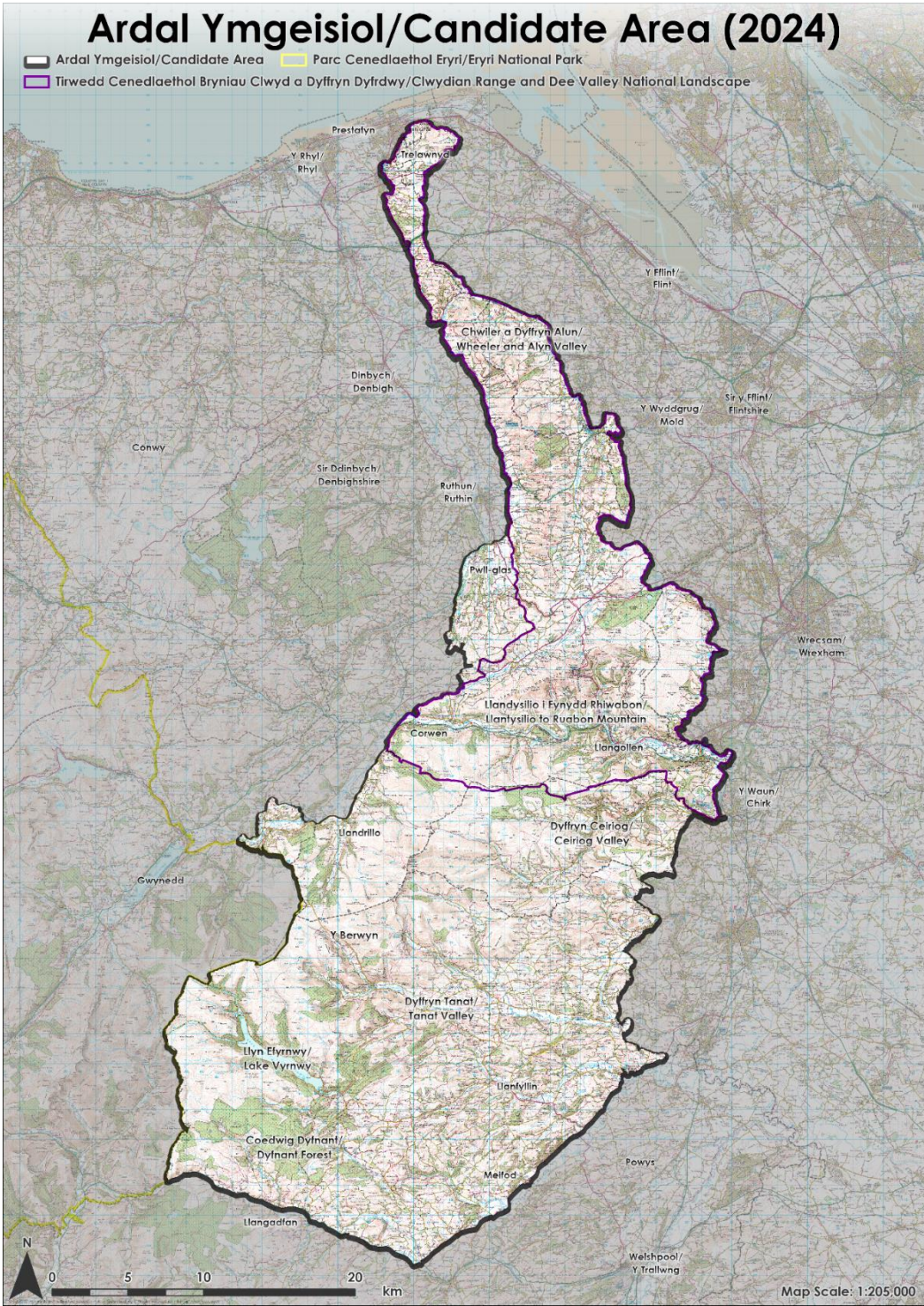
6. Next steps

NRW is currently finalising all reports, analysis and impact assessments. These will be presented to its Board in summer 2025. The Board will make a decision and only if a designation is approved will we move forward to preparing a detailed boundary map and hold a **statutory consultation**. If this happens, the detailed boundary map and all supporting evidence will be made available to the public and all stakeholders in the autumn/winter of 2025.

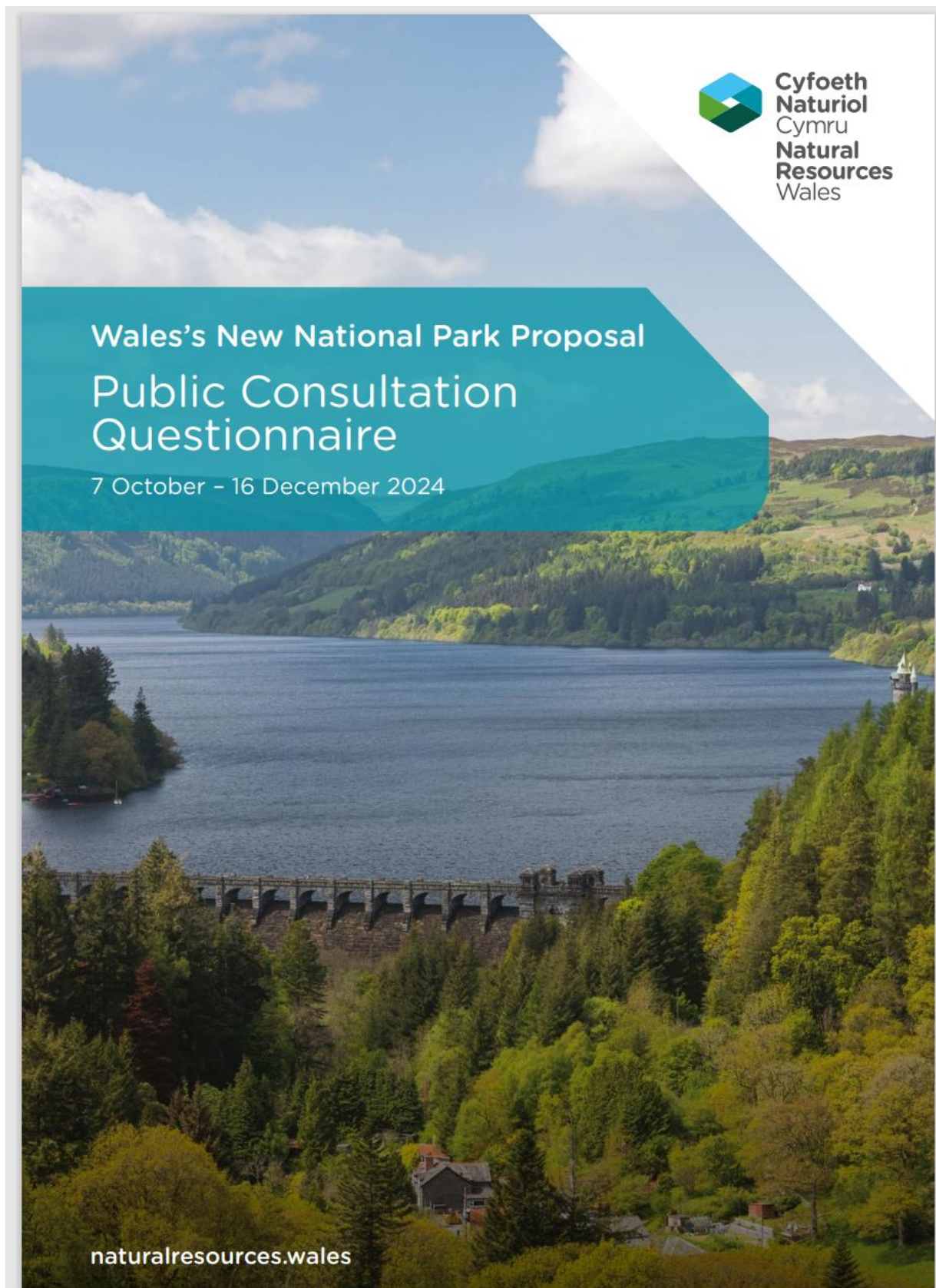
NRW would then prepare and submit a Designation Order to Welsh Government for consideration. In 2026 Ministers would decide whether to confirm, refuse, or vary the Designation Order or hold a Public Inquiry.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: Candidate Area Map



7.2 Appendix B: Questionnaire



Introduction

A study area, referred to as the Area of Search, based on the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley 'National Landscape' (AONB) was identified and shared during a public engagement period in late 2023.

Following on from this, we are now consulting on the proposed National Park Candidate Area. We are also interested in your views on how a National Park could manage some of the issues affecting the area for the benefit of people, nature, and communities.

We encourage you to read our short summary of the evidence or the full reports for anyone interested in the detail prior to completing the questionnaire. Both documents can be found on our project website or at the events.

This consultation is an important step in the proposal for a new National Park for Wales. Your consultation feedback is important to us. It is a fundamental part of the assessment process and will help us shape our proposals going forward.

You can send us your views by:

- Completing and returning this form to Freepost Plus RTJJ-AAKE-HKKU, Wales's New National Park Proposal, Natural Resources Wales, Maes y Ffynnon, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DW
- Completing and submitting the questionnaire via our project website. Scan the QR code.



About your feedback

The questions in this section help us to understand who is responding to this consultation.

Q1 Are you responding to this consultation as: Select one only

- ☐ An individual?
- ☐ On behalf of an organisation?
- (please specify which):
- ☐ On behalf of a group or community?
- (please specify which):

Q2 Which of the following best describe you? Select all answers that apply

- ☐ Local resident ☐ Farmer/landowner
- ☐ Visitor/tourist ☐ Business owner
- ☐ Other (please specify):
- ☐ Organisation/group representative
- (please specify your role):

Any further comments?

Q3 What is your postcode? We would like to capture how many respondents live within the Candidate Area or outside.

Postcode

The 2023 Engagement Period

We held an engagement period on an initial Area of Search for a National Park in October and November 2023. We carefully considered all the responses before presenting the findings in an engagement report published on our project website.

Q3a During our engagement period in 2023, a number of key themes were identified. In your opinion, which are the most important themes?

Select 3 only

- ☐ Landscape conservation, Recognition for the area, Tranquillity
- ☐ Wildlife, Agriculture and Land Management, Environment and Sustainability
- ☐ Management of Tourism, Public services, and infrastructure
- ☐ Questioning the necessity for change, Management and Controls, Costs, Funding, Bureaucracy
- ☐ Local people and Communities, Local Economy
- ☐ Access issues and Outdoor recreation
- ☐ Housing implications
- ☐ Culture and Heritage
- ☐ Planning implications
- ☐ Boundary location

Q3b Would you like to suggest any other themes or add any additional information? Please briefly explain your answer

Additional evidence can be submitted via our project inbox at designated.landscapes.programme@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

The Proposed National Park Candidate Area

After detailed evaluation by an independent and experienced landscape consultant, the Candidate Area map identifies the areas that met the statutory criteria for a National Park. Please refer to the Candidate Area map and summary of evidence report which is available to view on our website and at the events. The Candidate Area map we are consulting on is the refinement of the Area of Search 2023. This refinement took into consideration all comments raised in the 2023 engagement period and the technical assessment work in 2024. Some areas originally in the Area of Search have been excluded and two additional areas included. The summary of evidence report provides information on the decisions made.

Q4a Do you agree with our conclusions that this area has natural beauty?

Select one only

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree

Please give a reason for your answer

Is there any other important information we should include in our assessment of natural beauty?

If yes, please give further details

Q4b Do you agree with our conclusions that this area has opportunities for open air recreation?

Select one only

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree

Please give a reason for your answer

Is there any other important information we should include in our assessment of opportunities for open air recreation?

If yes, please give further details

Q4c Do you think the area proposed should be a National Park?

Select one only

- ☐ Yes
☐ Yes, but with modifications to the proposed boundary
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Please complete the following sections if you either agree or disagree with our overall proposals

Q5a To what extent do you agree with where the proposed National Park boundary has been drawn?

Select one only

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure

Any further comments?

Q5b The area around Pwll Glas and Upper Dee Valley are now included within the Candidate Area. Do you agree with this inclusion?

Select one only

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure

Any further comments?

Q5c The following areas are not included in the Candidate Area: Gronant Dunes, Vale of Clwyd, Halkyn Mountain, Hope Mountain and Mynydd Mynllo. To what extent do you agree with these being excluded?

Select one only

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure

Any further comments?

Q5d Do you have any other comments about the Candidate Area boundary?

Please specify

Q5e If a National Park is established, then it would require a new Name. Working with partners we have identified two options.

Please select the one you prefer or suggest your own

Bryniau
Clwyd a'r
Berwyn

Clwyd recalls the name of the local government area 1974-96. Bryniau Clwyd is the mountain chain from Prestatyn to the Dee Valley and recalls the medieval cantref of Dyffryn Clwyd. Berwyn is a historic name for the chain of mountains extending south from the Dee Valley. Together they describe the geographical extent of the Candidate area well.

Glyndŵr

Owain Glyndŵr lived within the Candidate area at Sycharth. A variant of his name, Glyndyfrdwy is one of the constituent regions of the park. He was the last Prince of Wales who led a rebellion in 1400 and by 1404 had established rule over the whole country. When his strongholds were recaptured, Glyndŵr disappeared and acquired a mythical status as the Mab Darogan, who will one day return. Glyndŵr also recalls the name of the local government area 1974-96.

- ☐ Park Cenedlaethol - **Bryniau Clwyd a'r Berwyn** - National Park
☐ Park Cenedlaethol - **Glyndŵr** - National Park
☐ Other

(Please specify with a short justification if possible)

Q6 Are there any other comments you wish to add on the proposal for a new National Park?

Q6 If you would like to be kept up to date, please provide us with your email address

Q10 Please also explain how you believe this proposal could be formulated or changed to have:

- Positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- No adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

Welsh Language Considerations

Q8 What is your Welsh language ability?

Select one only

- ☐ Able to speak Welsh fluently ☐ Able to understand and speak some Welsh
☐ Learning Welsh ☐ No understanding of Welsh

We would like to know your views on the effects of this proposal might have on the Welsh language, as follows:

- Opportunities for people to use Welsh language
- Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language

Q9 What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

About you

We have included the following questions in order to ensure the continued development of our diversity, equality and inclusion practices. You are not obliged to answer any of the questions, but we would appreciate your feedback to ensure all parts of society are represented. If you choose not to answer questions, it will not affect our consideration of your comments. The information you supply below is confidential and will be used solely for monitoring purposes. The data will be held in accordance with GDPR, more information can be found in our privacy statement available at our events or on our project website.

Please provide your consent by selecting the appropriate box below.

- ☐ Yes, I consent to my data being collected
☐ No, I do not consent to my data being collected

Q11 How old are you? Select one only

- ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18 - 24 ☐ 25 - 34 ☐ 35 - 44 ☐ 45 - 54
☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+ ☐ Prefer not to say

Q12 What is your gender? Select one only

- ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other (please specify);

Q13 What is your ethnicity?

Select one only

White

- ☐ Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
☐ Irish
☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
☐ Roma
☐ Any other White background (please specify);

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
☐ White and Black African
☐ White and Asian
☐ Any other Mixed or Multiple background (please specify);

Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British

- ☐ Indian
☐ Pakistani
☐ Bangladeshi
☐ Chinese
☐ Any other Asian background (please specify);

Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African

- ☐ Caribbean
☐ African background
☐ Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background (please specify);

Other ethnic group

- ☐ Arab
☐ Any other ethnic group (please specify);

Q14 Do you consider yourself to have any of the following?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Hearing Impairment
☐ Physical Impairment
☐ Visual Impairment
☐ Learning Disability
☐ Cognitive Disability
☐ Sensory Disability
☐ Mental Health
☐ Health Condition (lasting 12 months or more)
☐ Other (please specify);

Q15 Are you currently responsible for caring for an adult relative/partner, disabled child or other?

Select one only

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Please send this form back to us using our Freepost address, all you need is an envelope.
Freepost Plus RTJJ-AAKE-HKKU, Wales's New National Park Proposal, Natural Resources
Wales, Maes y Ffynnon, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DW