

Opening Statement to the Eryri Local Development Plan Examination by the Chief Executive, Mr. Emyr Williams

I am Emyr Williams the Chief Executive of Snowdonia National Park and I have 32 years' experience in land management matters within Snowdonia. I welcome you to the examination of the revised Eryri Local Development Plan.

Snowdonia designated in 1951 as a National Park, an area which is recognised both nationally and internationally for the quality and variety of its landscapes and seascapes and for our vibrant cultural assets, which also includes the Welsh language as a living and working language. Snowdonia is extremely rich in both the quantity and quality of its flora and fauna and it is the relationship between the landscape, the people, our communities, our heritage and the opportunities that these provide, which maintain and drive a significant proportion of the economic activity of the area; all interrelated.

The purposes of a National Park are to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

Whilst fulfilling these purposes the Authority also has a duty to consider the social wellbeing and economy of our communities.

Snowdonia extends from Conwy in the north to Aberdyfi in the south and covers an area of 829 square miles – which is just over 10% of Wales. Our population is 25,700 of which 59% are able to speak Welsh, with some communities the figure being as high as 85%. We have over 10 million visitor days per year with certain honeypots within the area. Our largest market town in Snowdonia has a population of only 2,370. The value to the economy of the area due to the special qualities of the Park is estimated to be in the region of £134 Million (GVA) and supports approximately 4,459 jobs due to the environment.

The richness of the area in terms of its environment is highlighted by the extent of the designations within the area: 1900 Listed Buildings, 372 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 15 Special Areas of Conservation, 5 Special Protected Areas, 3 Ramsar sites, 107 SSSI's, 21 National Nature Reserves, one UNESCO world Heritage site and an UNESCO Biosphere site.

Significant challenges face areas such as Snowdonia in the coming years and these challenges come from different directions: climate change, people pressures, Brexit, ability to trade and workforce matters. I am confident that this review will enable Snowdonia to face these challenges in the coming years.

Welsh Government since the adoption of the current Eryri LDP have introduced ambitious legislation and most notably the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act of 2015. This Act along with the Planning Act 2015 and the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 has shaped how all should consider development and has informed the work of this Authority, including the revised LDP.

In the same period, Welsh Government commissioned reviews of both National Park Authorities and the purposes of the Designated Landscapes in Wales. Our Minister in March of this year concluded on the reviews and confirmed the importance of the Protected Landscapes to Wales. The Minister confirmed that the retention of National Park Authorities as special purpose Local Authorities and that there was no case to change the statutory purposes or duties of National Parks in Wales. During the review, consideration was given to the Sandford Principle in relation to National Parks. The Minister also confirmed that there was not a case to review the Sandford Principle in the National Parks of Wales.

Our National Park Management Plan (Cynllun Eryri) which is a statutory plan is currently under review. This review reflects recent legislative changes in Wales; the Plan is reviewed in Partnership with our stakeholders. The Park Plan will retain the principles agreed and adopted in the current plan, which underpin the LDP.

The review report and the evidence base confirmed that the short form review was the most appropriate approach to revise the Eryri LDP, which was agreed with stakeholders.

Our officers have prepared significant evidence and data to support this short form revision and I trust that you will receive all the information/data/evidence that you require to conduct the examination of the Eryri LDP. Our officers are here to provide you with the support, in whatever way they can, during this examination. I would like to thank all for the understanding and support in bringing this revised Eryri LDP to you.

Diolch.