Briefing: Glyndŵr National Park

Context

In the last Senedd term, the previous Welsh Government (WG) had a Programme for Government commitment to designate a new National Park in North East Wales, a significant undertaking governed by a statutory framework set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

As per the Act, NRW was tasked assembling and assessing the evidence base, which they carried out between 2023 to 2026, culminating in NRW's Board determining that the proposed area meets the statutory criteria for National Park designation and submitting the Designation Order (DO) for the Glyndŵr National Park to Welsh Ministers in Feb 2026.

The proposed DO covers some 927km^2 across parts of Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham, Powys and a small area of Gwynedd (see Annex 1).

Legacy position

On receipt of a DO, Welsh Ministers have three options: to confirm the DO, confirm it with modifications, or reject it. Confirmation of the DO would create a new National Park and would lead to the subsequent establishment of a new National Park Authority. Where objections from local authorities in the footprint of the proposed National Park have been received during the notification period, the Welsh Ministers are required, before confirming the order, to hold a local inquiry (referred to as a public local inquiry (PLI)). This allows those objections to be fully considered and would culminate in the production of a report by the person appointed to hold the PLI.

Objections to the DO were received in February 2026 from the five local authorities within the proposed area of designation. On 26 March 2026, the then Minister with responsibility for this work announced plans to appoint Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) to hold a PLI to consider the representations and objections made in respect of the DO (i.e. not just those from the local authorities). Subsequently, officials have done some initial work with PEDW in connection with the establishment of a PLI, including preparation of draft guidance.

Options for the new Government

The Glyndŵr National Park Designation Order is a legal order that requires a decision by Welsh Ministers. There are two broad options available to Welsh Ministers:

- **Continue the process of the Public Local Inquiry as initiated by the previous administration**. An inquiry would allow consideration of broader issues beyond the statutory tests that were the focus of NRW's assessment, and would provide a forum for consideration of the representations provided (e.g. relating to increased traffic in the area, planning, house prices, impact on the Welsh language etc). Following the inquiry, the Inspector would submit a report (which would include recommendations), including on these wider set of considerations, to inform Ministers' in their determination. Welsh Ministers would retain full discretion to confirm, confirm with modifications, or reject the order.
- **Reject the order at this stage without holding a PLI.** This would remove the need for a PLI and avoid future costs associated with establishing a new National Park and a NPA. [Redacted - Regulations 12(4)(d) and 12(4)(e) -Internal communications and Information in the course of completion – Incomplete internal information]

Decision-making process

[Redacted - Regulations 12(4)(d) and 12(4)(e) -Internal communications and Information in the course of completion – Incomplete internal information]

[Redacted - Regulation 13 - Personal data]
10 June 2026

Annex 1 – Map Proposed Glyndŵr National Park

