

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Date of meeting:	17 December 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas
Contact Officer:	Roland Evans
Contact Telephone Number:	01286 679 450
Title of Item:	Submission of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site Nomination

THE DECISION SOUGHT

1. To acknowledge the feedback following the public consultation on the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site Management Plan
2. To acknowledge the relevant amendments that have been made to the content of the Management Plan and the full Nomination Dossier to UNESCO in response to the consultation;
3. To approve the submission of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales Heritage Site Full Nomination Dossier to the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris for the World Heritage Committee's consideration.

THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

4. In October 2018, the relevant UK Government Minister, Michael Ellis MP, announced that the next World Heritage nomination to be submitted by the Government for UNESCO's consideration would be the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales nomination. This will take place in January 2020.
5. We have now reached the pinnacle of the work and need to update the Cabinet following the consultation period as well as receive the approval of the Cabinet to submit the full nomination to UNESCO.

INTRODUCTION

6. The Council has been following steps to develop the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales Heritage Site nomination since 2009.
7. As part of the Council Plan, priority has been given to 'Addressing Gwynedd's Slate Heritage', and a budget of £375,000 has been earmarked since 2013. The Gwynedd Plan notes:

"We are looking to realise a programme of regeneration activities in these areas which will lead to an increase in residents' ownership of their heritage, the form and appearance of communities and the quality of tourists' experience, along with continuing to work to secure a World Heritage Site status for the slate industry in Gwynedd."

8. The main objectives of the nomination development are:
 - A thriving regional economy
 - Viable and lively communities that are proud of their community and heritage - regeneration
 - High quality skilled employment
 - A higher value tourism sector, throughout the year
 - The continuation of the slate industry
 - A sustainable and living landscape
 - Celebrate the role of our slate heritage in the world
 - Safeguard and improve physical heritage

9. The nomination area includes the six areas below, and a map can be seen in [Appendix 1](#):
 - Part 1: Penrhyn Quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn
 - Part 2: Dinorwig Slate Quarry Mountain Landscape
 - Part 3: Nantlle Valley Slate Quarry Landscape
 - Part 4: Gorseddau and Prince of Wales Slate Quarries, the railways and the mill
 - Part 5: Ffestiniog, its slate mines and quarries, 'city of slates' and railway to Porthmadog
 - Part 6: Bryneglwys Slate Quarry, Abergynolwyn Village and the Talyllyn Railway

10. The nomination is being submitted because the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales is an outstanding example of cultural landscape that has been formed through centuries of mining, working and transporting slate to markets worldwide. The whole area demonstrates every relevant element - visually, legibly and mostly accessible:
 - Mining
 - Processing
 - Transporting
 - Homes and Communities
 - Final use
 - The transformation from an agricultural society to an industrial society
 - The way indigenous culture and language were reinforced by global industrialisation
 - Gwynedd was the world's largest slate exporter in the mid-19th Century
 - Technology, expertise and people were transferred between the Gwynedd Slate areas and the world, e.g. slate sawing technology, narrow-gauge, hydro, mining technology, etc.

11. A Partnership Steering Group meets on a monthly basis under the Chairmanship of Lord Dafydd Wigley in order to drive the work of the nomination and associated projects forward. The group includes Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park, Bangor University, the National Trust, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, National Museum Wales, Welsh Government, ICOMOS-UK and representation on behalf of the slate sector.

12. Amongst other documents, it is required for all World Heritage Site nominations to develop two key and essential documents for the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's consideration. These are: Dossier (Full Application); and Management Plan

13. The Dossier is a technical, extensive document that makes the case for designating the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales as a World Heritage Site in a historical and international context. In addition, it relates this to today and the future and how the site would be protected, managed and developed. A draft copy of the dossier will be available prior to the Cabinet meeting.
14. The Management Plan translates the important 'features' that are highlighted in the Dossier into a practical management plan that highlights how the site will be managed in a practical sense in future following inscription with an associated Action Plan.
15. The Steering Group determined that it would be more practical and beneficial to consult on the content of the Management Plan rather than the Dossier as it would be easier to relate it to the people of Gwynedd.

Consultation on the Management Plan

16. A consultation period for the Management Plan was arranged between August and October 2019. During this period, the media and press gave attention to the consultation, and eight open sessions to the public were organised across Gwynedd.
17. Copies of the Management Plan and questionnaire were provided on-line and paper copies were available in Gwynedd Libraries, Siop Gwynedd and the Archives. Each Community/Town Council relevant to the nomination was sent a letter, and an e-mail was sent to relevant organisations.
18. Following the consultation period, 120 general responses (responding to the first two questions) were received, as well as 63 full responses. Some direct letters and e-mails were also received.
19. 93.6% of the respondents were generally positive or very positive in favour of the development of the nomination, and 95.5% understood or fully understood what was important about the Slate landscape.
20. Four common themes were specifically raised in the responses to the consultation. More detail is included in [Appendix 2](#) which demonstrates how we have responded to the observations:
 - The need for a Buffer Zone to protect the site? - A Buffer Zone has now been reviewed, and a Buffer Zone will not be mapped. A Buffer Zone policy will be in place through the land conservation designations that already exist.
 - A lack of consideration has been given to primary and secondary aggregates in the area, and their importance to the economy of Gwynedd - this is acknowledged and has been strengthened in the new documents.
 - The impact of tourism in light of the designation on Gwynedd communities, and the importance of safety on the sites - this is acknowledged and mitigation measures have been identified.
 - A lack of consideration to the Welsh language and any impact on the language - acknowledge that this element is weak in the original documents, although the language and culture are central and core features of the nomination. These elements have been strengthened and highlighted.
21. We have been able to respond positively to the four main themes raised, and we have amended the Management Plan and the Dossier to reflect this.
22. It should also be noted, following intensive discussions with the owners of Aberllefenni Slate Quarry and, given their vision for the site in future, it was agreed that the quarry and that area would not be part of the final nomination.

Economic Regeneration in light of the nomination process

23. In developing the nomination, one of the main objectives of the Council and its partners is to drive economic and social regeneration.
24. Gwynedd Council has already attracted over £1m in additional resources to support communities and businesses in the slate areas across the county, and a number of other projects are in development by partners in the area. The Council's work includes:

Grants (total project cost)

Heritage Lottery Fund 2018 - 2021	£402,000
Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig 2018 - 2020	£ 80,000
Snowdonia Partnership Fund 2018 - 2019	£ 15,000
RCDF 2019 - 2021	£ 89,000
Welsh Government's Town Centre Loans Fund (Bethesda and Penygroes)	£ 500,000
TOTAL	£ 1,086,000

25. The above additional funding has enabled us to undertake activities that focus on the Slate valleys, mainly under the banner of the LleCHI plan that is attempting to regenerate through heritage and culture. The main objectives of the LleCHI project is to:
- Focus on areas: Bethesda, Deiniolen, Llanberis, Penygroes, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Tywyn and Dysynni
 - Celebrate our rich slate heritage and our area's contribution to the world
 - Develop Cynlluniau Cynefin that are local regeneration plans to identify the community's regeneration needs in the context of their heritage, and agree on an action plan to realise the priorities.
 - Support education, skills and volunteering
 - Create local LleCHI ambassadors - there are now 12 Ambassadors working across the area, and cultural activities have been held at three primary schools.
 - Promote arts and cultural events and activities, e.g. the Blaenau Ffestiniog Slate Festival and Penygroes Young People Event were supported.
 - Develop the Gwynedd 'Slate Story' and ensure that the story is interpreted to everyone.
26. It can also be seen now that a number of communities, businesses and individuals take advantage of the opportunity created through the nomination to give Slate a prominent place in their developments and projects.

THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

27. As one of the Gwynedd Plan's priorities, that has now been under development for over 10 years, the Cabinet needs to approve the submission of the full nomination to DCMS and UNESCO.
28. There is a fixed annual application window, and the Council is expected to submit a full digital application to the DCMS by 18 December 2019.
29. If we miss this window, there is no certainty on when the nomination could be submitted.

NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

18 December Submit the Digital Full Application and Management Plan to DCMS

27 January 2020	Submit the Paper Form Full Application and Management Plan to DCMS and UNESCO
October 2020	ICOMOS / UNESCO Visit to Gwynedd
May 2021	ICOMOS Recommendation to the World Heritage Committee
June / July 2021	The World Heritage Committee's Decision on the designation

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

30. A public consultation was held on the Management Plan, as noted in this report.

Views of the Monitoring Officer

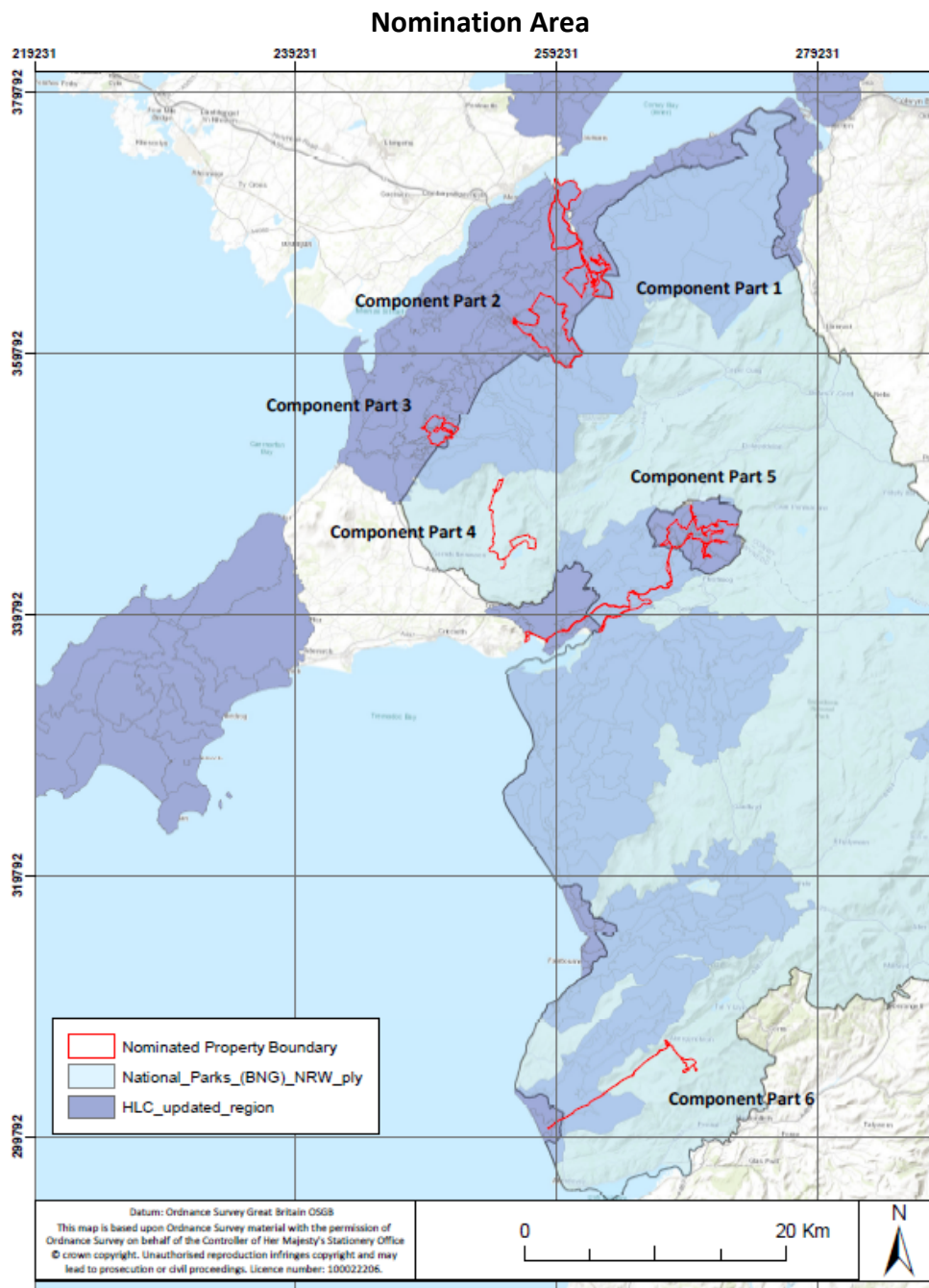
“The report and associated documents are the conclusion of years of work in order to be in a position to submit the nomination. It is noted that an extensive consultation process was undertaken and, following receipt of responses, amendments were made to the documentation. The consultation process undertaken is considered to have been inclusive and appropriate. Matters of management will need to be considered if the application is successful, and it is noted that plans are progressing to address these issues.”

Views of the Chief Finance Officer

“I confirm the accuracy of the figures set out in the report. Paragraph 30 states that adequate resources will be required to undertake the future management of the site, and the application to be submitted to the UK Government's Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport identifies £30,000 to manage the site in future; I am satisfied that this resource has been funded as it involves the time of officers involved. World Heritage Site status could have significant economic benefits for the county and its communities and businesses, with the potential for bringing investment into the local economy leading to job creation. In view of this, I support the decision being sought.”

Views of the Local Member

Not a local matter.



- Part 1:** Penrhyn Quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn
- Part 2:** Dinorwig Slate Quarry Mountain Landscape
- Part 3:** Nantlle Valley Slate Quarry Landscape
- Part 4:** Gorseddau and Prince of Wales Slate Quarries, the railways and the mill
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Consultation on the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales Heritage Site Management Plan:
Response to the main themes that were raised

THEME	RESPONSE
<p>The need for a Buffer Zone to protect the site?</p>	<p>In considering the comprehensive protection that already exists in the nomination area through the designations of the National Park, the Landscapes of Historic Interest, the Local Development Plans and National Planning Policy; and, following further discussions with experts in the field, the UK National Commission for UNESCO, DCMS, Historic England and ICOMOS-UK, the Steering Group determined on 15 November that the designations and the existing protection would act as a buffer zone policy. Buffer zones will not be designated on maps as the requisite protection is in place through existing landscape designations.</p>
<p>A lack of consideration has been given to primary and secondary aggregates in the area, and their importance to the economy of Gwynedd.</p>	<p>The Council and its partners in the nomination accept that inadequate attention was given to this field within the original documents.</p> <p>Clear acknowledgement is given to the importance of primary and secondary aggregates within the new documents in the wider area and beyond the nomination site.</p> <p>There is an action to develop Supplementary Planning Guidance in future.</p> <p>It is emphasised that the existing mineral planning process would steer developments.</p>
<p>The impact of tourism in light of the designation on Gwynedd communities</p>	<p>Concern about the side effects of tourism in the area is acknowledged.</p> <p>A comprehensive Interpretation Strategy is being developed in order to ensure that we tell the story from the perspective of the</p>

<p>The importance of safety on the sites</p>	<p>people of Gwynedd and its international context.</p> <p>It is aimed to disperse visitors from the busy main centres to other areas of Gwynedd in order to spread the benefit. Research is underway to explore how the Council could manage second homes in future.</p> <p>The Council is revising its tourism priorities for the future, and this will be a consideration for the field.</p> <p>The message in terms of safety on post-industrial sites is strengthened in the document.</p> <p>A commission has been completed to work with the sector to develop a campaign on safety in quarries.</p> <p>It is emphasised that the designation of the area does not mean that every part of the area must have public access. These elements have been strengthened in the new documents.</p>
<p>A lack of consideration to the Welsh language and any impact on the language.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that this element is weak in the Management Plan, although the language and culture are central and core features of the nomination.</p> <p>A baseline will be established to monitor any impact on the Welsh language in light of the designation.</p> <p>Planning and language impact assessment arrangements will be followed for any relevant developments.</p> <p>Arts and cultural activities are supported across the area in order to promote the use of the language and celebrate our culture.</p>