

# SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY



## **CONSULTATION REPORT: SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: THE SLATE LANDSCAPE OF NORTHWEST WALES WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

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# 1 BACKGROUND

## The Policy Context

- 1.1 The SNPA adopted the Eryri Local Development Plan (ELDP) 2016-2031 on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The ELDP 2016-2031 contains Strategic Policies and Development Policies as a basis for deciding planning applications. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan was adopted on 31 July 2017. It relates to the Gwynedd and Anglesey Planning Authority areas. The Plan provides wide-ranging policies along with allocations. Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPGs) provide further detailed information, in support of LDP policies.
- 1.2 SPGs will be a material planning consideration during the process of assessing and determining planning applications. Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate will place considerable weight on supplementary planning guidance that stem from, and are consistent with the LDPs. SPGs should expand and interpret planning policies and not in themselves, form new areas of policy.

## The need for a Supplement Planning Guidance

- 1.3 The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales which comprises of six Component Parts was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in July 2021. The World Heritage Site (WHS) is considered to represent an exceptional example of an industrial cultural landscape that was profoundly shaped by large-scale slate quarrying and underground mining, and by the working and transport of slate for national and international markets. This industry transformed both the environment and the way of life of those who lived and worked in the mountains of Snowdonia and Gwynedd.
- 1.4 The six Component Parts are as follows:
  - ❖ Component Part 1: Penrhyn Slate Quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn
  - ❖ Component Part 2: Dinorwig Slate Quarry Mountain Landscape
  - ❖ Component Part 3: Nantlle Valley Slate Quarry Landscape
  - ❖ Component Part 4: Gorseddau and Prince of Wales Slate Quarries, Railway and Mill
  - ❖ Component Part 5: Ffestiniog: its Slate Mines and Quarries, 'city of slates' and railway to Porthmadog
  - ❖ Component Part 6: Bryneglwys Slate Quarry, Abergynolwyn Village and the Talylyn Railway
- 1.5 The majority of the World Heritage Site is primarily located within the county of Gwynedd, with some of the areas also sitting within and adjacent to the Snowdonia National Park boundary.
- 1.6 For over a decade, with Gwynedd Council leading on the project to secure the North West Wales Slate Landscape 'World Heritage Site' status to protect and promote the

special qualities of these areas for future generations. As the process evolved it became clear that a policy would be required within both the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan and the Eryri Local Development Plan to protect the slate landscape while the work to secure WHS status continued. As a result of this policies were included to protect and enhance the then 'Candidate World Heritage Site' within their historic environment policies. Since its inscription as a WHS, the protection and enhancement of the designated landscapes continues to be protected by policies within the LDPs. The SPG provides further detailed information, in support of these Local Development Plan policies.

- 1.7 Gwynedd Council Policy Officers, and National Park Authority Policy Officers have been working together to prepare the SPG since the summer of 2019 and have received extensive input from key stakeholders. These include the Historic Environment Services, Land and Business Owners.

## **2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 A draft version of this SPG was approved for public consultation during a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 and by the SNPA's Planning and Access Committee on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- 2.2 The approved draft of this SPG was the subject of a 8 week public consultation between the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021, and the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- 2.3 Details of the public consultation were available on both Gwynedd Council's and SNPA websites. Paper copies were also available for inspection in Siop Gwynedd (Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau), as well as the local libraries located in Gwynedd and the Snowdonia National Park. Emails/letters were also sent to all Councillors, Community Councils, and those on the Authorities Contact Databases.
- 2.4 Interested parties were informed to respond to the consultation through submitting comments by emailing [polisicynllunio@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:polisicynllunio@gwynedd.llyw.cymru) or by post.
- 2.5 A total of 23 comments were received, resulting in 7 amendments.
- 2.6 Appendix A of this report, summarises the comments received, the Authorities Joint response to the comments and, where appropriate, any changes required to the SPG.

## APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED AND OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

Resp ID	Rep ID	First Name	Surname	Organisation	Chapter	Paragraph number	Officer Summary	Officer Response	Changes Proposed
SNPA001	001	Grace	Lewis	Network Rail	4	4.23	<p>Consideration should be given to the impact on the existing nearby Network Rail capacity and facilities in assessing development proposals. This should be done in consultation with Network Rail where relevant. Network Rail is a statutory consultee for any planning applications near relevant railway land and Network Rail. Therefore, appreciate the Council providing Network Rail with an opportunity to comments on any future pre-application or planning applications should they be submitted for sites adjoining the railway or within close proximity to the railway as we may have more specific comments to make.</p>	<p>Network Rail is a statutory consultee where applications affect the railway. Where necessary Network Rail will be consulted. Therefore, no changes are proposed to this specific SPG as this is general practice for all relevant planning applications, not just those specific to the World Heritage Site.</p>	No changes proposed.
SNPA002	001			Woodland Trust	General		<p>Should clarify within the SPG that the premature removal of any mature tree or shrub may adversely affect the health and welfare of residents, and cause biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. This cannot be fully or quickly mitigated by new planting. Where development intersects with Woodland Trust land, and all woods open to public access, consultation is required. It is expected for an environmental assessment to be submitted that considers the potential impact of construction and subsequent use, in particular any impact on ancient woodlands or ancient trees, the loss of mature street trees, fragmentation and disturbance of native habitats, and the introduction of street lighting into areas of native habitat.</p> <p>Proposes to include the following overarching principles to establish and</p>	<p>No change. The overarching principles proposed are relevant to all planning applications not only those which will be considered within the designated World Heritage Site Component Areas. Therefore, no changes are proposed to this specific SPG as these are principles which should be considered for all relevant planning applications, not just those specific to the World Heritage Site.</p>	No changes proposed.

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							<p>highlight within the SPG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That active travel networks are co-designed with green infrastructure networks and nature recovery networks.</li> <li>• That hard-surfaced active travel tracks are not routed through sensitive and irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland.</li> <li>• That route selection and design processes ensures that routes retain wildlife habitat and street-side green infrastructure and enhance existing road space with new planting.</li> <li>• That opportunities are sought to work with communities to identify sites along active travel routes for additional tree and shrub planting and carry out that planting.</li> <li>• That appropriate ecological expertise is available in teams responsible for the delivery of Active Travel Plans.</li> </ul>		
SNPA003	001	Ben	Lewis	Barton Willmore LLP	1	1.8	<p>Propose minor amendment for accuracy:</p> <p>under 'SECTION 2' – 'Part' should be 'Parts'</p>	Agree to amend grammatical error for accuracy (English only)	SECTION 2 - The World Heritage Site - defines WHS in Northwest Wales. It states that the area comprises six separate Component Parts or areas and these are shown on maps in Appendix 1 together with further information on the history, Outstanding Universal Value and physical and social attributes of the WHS.
SNPA003	002	Ben	Lewis	Barton Willmore LLP	2	2.7	<p>Propose minor amendment for accuracy:</p> <p>last sentence of paragraph should be '...seven well-being goals', rather than '...seen well-being goals'.</p>	Agree to amend grammatical error for accuracy (English only)	These themes consider the needs of residents and businesses in the region and identify opportunities to support the goals of the Well-being of future generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Themes set out in the management plan contribute to the seven well-being goals.
SNPA003	003	Ben	Lewis	Barton Willmore LLP	2	2.14	<p>Propose to include the following within para 2.14:</p>	As this SPG does not include Anglesey or the relevant areas in	No changes proposed.

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							“Large scale renewable <b>and low carbon energy</b> schemes provide economic benefit through direct employment and tourism as in the case at Dinorwig Power Station. Both Local Development Plans contain policies to support the development of appropriate renewable <b>and low carbon</b> energy developments”.	Snowdonia, the inclusion of "and low carbon energy" is not considered appropriate.	
SNPA003	004	Ben	Lewis	Barton Willmore LLP	3	3.4	Propose reference to be made to 'Future Wales: the National Plan to 2040' as this is the highest tier of the development hierarchy in Wales and is the principal policy against which energy projects of 10 – 250MW (as Developments of National Significance) are determined.	Agree, reference should be made to Future Wales in para 3.4. Future Wales outlines that managing the North's outstanding historic and natural resources is a priority for the region. The region's distinctive heritage should be preserved and enhanced by high quality development. The Local Development Plans policies will be considered if any development of national significance is proposed and therefore it is not considered appropriate to include specific reference to Developments of National Significance within this SPG.	3.4 In this section the most relevant and useful national policies in relation to WHS are discussed, <b>which are material planning consideration when determining planning application. Future Wales (p.121) states that “managing the North's outstanding historic and natural resources is a priority for the region”, and “the region's distinctive heritage should be preserved and enhanced by high quality development”.. They are contained in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and are a material planning consideration when determining planning applications.</b> Local planning policies, although more locally specific are based on the national <b>planning</b> policy framework.
SNPA003	005	Ben	Lewis	Barton Willmore LLP	3	3.16	Propose to include the following within para 3.16:  “Local Development Plans are required to be in accordance with 'Future Wales: the national plan to 2040' which is the highest tier of the development plan hierarchy”.	This is not considered to be a necessary change as Future Wales is part of the suite of National Policies and any specific reference to Future Wales would	No changes proposed.



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								omit and exclude any other future policies.	
SNPA003	006	Ben	Lewis	Barton Willmore LLP	4	4.9 (now para 4.12)	<p>Propose to include the following to reflect the revised PPW Edition 11:</p> <p>"Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area."</p>	<p>Agree to reflect updated PPW Edition 11</p>	<p>In PPW design is defined as:-  <del>"the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental, and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings"</del></p> <p>"Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area."</p>

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SNPA004	001	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	Foreword		Propose to include the following within the foreword:  '...slate from the area is still of global importance contributing to the export market.'	No change. The foreword introduces the World Heritage Site and the history of the designated area and recognised the contribution the slate industry continues to make to the economy, local and global. Therefore, this is not considered to be a necessary change.	No changes proposed.
SNPA004	002	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	1	1.1	Supporting the principle of the SPG	Noted.	No changes proposed.
SNPA004	003	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	1	1.3	Propose to include reference to PPW, Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and other developing regional plans in para 1.3	No change. This is covered in Section 3, specifically para 3.4 and 3.5, with para 1.3 referring specifically to the Local Planning Policy context.	No changes proposed.
SNPA004	004	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	2	2.5	Support	Noted.	No changes proposed.
SNPA004	005	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	2	2.8	Support	Noted.	No changes proposed.
SNPA004	006	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	2	2.13	Support	Noted.	No changes proposed.
SNPA004	007	Nick	Horsley	Mineral Products Association Wales	4		Propose to include information on the EIA process, particularly the screening and scoping of projects and how these dovetail with the Pre-application enquiry process.	Agree to include guidance on the EIA process	Include as new paras 4.5 and 4.6 in SPG  <b>4.5 Proposals for development will need to take into account any potential</b>

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									<p>effect on the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site Designation. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required for developments that are located in, or partly within a 'sensitive area' or fall within Schedule 2 of the Regulations 3 and exceed the relevant thresholds. The effect on the visual landscape is a consideration in this respect and therefore proposals close to or within the World Heritage Site may be considered to require EIA as a result of the EIA screening process, and the EIA would need to have regard to the designation. Large or significant proposals which have received confirmation that EIA is not required would need consider landscape designations by way of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) undertaken by a landscape professional. Smaller proposals may require a Landscape Statement. This would entail a short report with a description of the site, its landscape characteristics, natural and built heritage features, night-time character and the location and nature of public/residential views of the site. Photographs, an annotated site layout plan, and sketch illustrations are helpful to explain the existing site and the development proposal. The report would need to demonstrate how the planning proposal positively addresses the landscape and visual issues.</p>

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									4.6 Developers are encouraged to engage with the Local Planning Authority via the pre-application advice service at the earliest opportunity, in order that the requirements for EIA screening and/or a LVIA or Landscape Statement can be advised accordingly. LVIA should be undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) or any subsequent updates and be undertaken by a landscape professional.
SNPA005	001	Zoe	Pritchard	Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog	2	2.5	Recommend rewording part of paragraph 2.5 to avoid misunderstanding regarding the capacity of the Ffestiniog slate quarries to continue to excavate in future, as well as not adequately explaining that the existing Bro Ffestiniog quarries were outside the designated boundary, and therefore not affected.	No change. This extract is from the approved Property Management Plan for the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site and therefore can not be amended.	No changes proposed.
SNPA005	002	Zoe	Pritchard	Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog	2	2.8	Recommend rewording 'Objective 7' of paragraph 2.8 to avoid misunderstanding regarding the capacity of the Ffestiniog slate quarries to continue to excavate in future, as well as not adequately explaining that the existing Bro Ffestiniog quarries were outside the designated boundary, and therefore not affected.	No change. This extract is from the approved Property Management Plan for the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site and therefore can not be amended.	No changes proposed.

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SNPA005	003	Zoe	Pritchard	Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog	2	2.13	Recommend rewording part of paragraph 2.13 to avoid misunderstanding regarding the capacity of the Ffestiniog slate quarries to continue to excavate in future, as well as not adequately explaining that the existing Bro Ffestiniog quarries were outside the designated boundary, and therefore not affected.	It is considered that para 2.13 reflects the existing mineral workings both within and outside the boundary. The World Heritage Site boundary for each component part are included within Appendix 1. However, for clarification purposes, the maps will be replaced with maps which clearly show the areas within and outside the World Heritage Site.	See appendix (i) for the replacement maps.
SNPA005	004	Zoe	Pritchard	Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog	General		The guidance should not hinder the future development of the slate quarrying industry, especially in an area such as Bro Ffestiniog.	No change. As is set out in para 1.1 of the SPG, the purpose of this Guidance is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assist the public and their agents in preparing planning applications and in guiding them in discussions with officers before submitting planning applications,</li> <li>• assist officers to assess planning applications, and officers and councillors to make decisions about planning applications within the Gwynedd Council Local Planning Authority area and Snowdonia National Park Authority area, and</li> <li>• help Planning Inspectors make decisions on appeals</li> </ul>	No changes proposed.

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								and, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give specific advice on planning issues relating to the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site (WHS).</li> </ul> <p>The general aim is to improve the quality of new developments and facilitate a consistent and transparent way of making decisions. The purpose of the guidance is therefore not to hinder development.</p>	
SNPA005	005	Zoe	Pritchard	Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog	General		Support	Noted.	No changes proposed.
GWY006	001	Michael	Hartill		General		<p>Concern in relation to new build houses or changing/developing existing houses in Abergynolwyn for residents.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What specifically does this area of the document mean?</li> <li>Are there going to be further restrictions or conditions if people wish to apply for planning to amend or alter their houses?</li> <li>Is Abergynolwyn village now going to have more restrictions than the rest of Gwynedd?</li> </ol> <p>The document needs to provide some detail so as an informed decision can be made</p>	<p>No change. As is set out in para 1.1 of the SPG, the purpose of this Guidance is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assist the public and their agents in preparing planning applications and in guiding them in discussions with officers before submitting planning applications,</li> <li>assist officers to assess planning applications, and officers and councillors to make decisions about planning applications within the Gwynedd Council Local Planning Authority area and Snowdonia National Park Authority area, and</li> </ul>	No changes proposed.

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								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help Planning Inspectors make decisions on appeals and,</li> <li>• give specific advice on planning issues relating to the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site (WHS).</li> </ul> <p>The general aim is to improve the quality of new developments and facilitate a consistent and transparent way of making decisions. The purpose of the guidance is therefore not to hinder development. Decisions on any developments will be made in accordance with the relevant LDP policies and the SPG. The SPG does not introduce new policy, it only provides further guidance to existing policy.</p>	
GWY007	001	Shaun	Denny	Breedon Group	General		Recognises and welcomes the Guidance's acknowledgment that the slate industry in Gwynedd remains a vibrant and dynamic industry with a strong future as well as an unrivalled history. Indeed, Welsh Slate continue to make a premium roofing product used not only throughout the UK and exported globally, giving Gwynedd a global profile. It is important to the Company's future, however, that the Guidance is unequivocal in seeing the desired	No change. The SPG recognises the importance of tourism, and this is reflected in paras 2.11, 2.12, 2.15 and 2.16. This is in accordance with the Property Management Plan and both Local Development Plans expanding on adopted Policy and Guidance.	No changes proposed.

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							development of tourism as being on a par with the extant slate industry in terms of its economic and cultural contribution. A statement to this effect within the adopted version of the Guidance would be most welcome.		
GWY008	001	Cerian	Davies	Comisiynydd y Gymraeg	4		<p>The Guidance refers to the vision published in the Management Plan, which includes "strengthening the Welsh language". We support this aim and contribute to the consultation with a view to strengthening the Guidance itself in this context.</p> <p>The importance of the Welsh language is mentioned several times throughout the document. However, it is unclear how the Planning Authorities would take action to ensure that the Welsh language is considered in all proposed developments within the World Heritage Site. For example, are applicants for planning permission required to answer the Question for consideration which refers to the Welsh language? Do the Authorities provide advice on how to consider the Welsh language appropriately? Do they have criteria for deciding whether Welsh was considered appropriate? It would be helpful for the Authorities to issue such advice and criteria.</p>	Noted. Both Local Planning Authorities have adopted Policies and SPGs specifically relating to development and the Welsh Language. The SPGs provide detailed guidance on how the Welsh Language should be considered when assessing planning applications. It is not appropriate to repeat this guidance in its entirety within this specific SPG, however to ensure that those using this SPG are aware of the guidance and requirements in relation to Welsh Language, reference will be made in the SPG to both LPAs Policies and SPGs.	Include as new para 4.7 in the SPG  <b>4.7 The Welsh Language must be considered when preparing and determining planning applications. Further guidance is available within Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities SPG (Gwynedd Council) and Planning and the Welsh Language SPG (SNPA).</b>