# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government’s Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks** |
| **DATE** | **27 July 2018** |
| **BY** | **Hannah Blythyn, Minister for Environment** |

This week is National Parks Week and today I am publishing my priorities for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks, and announcing the reinstatement of the National Park Authorities’ budgets to support delivery.

<https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/review-designated-landscapes-wales/?lang=en>

In my Oral Statement on 13 March I confirmed all of Wales’ existing designated landscapes will be retained and their current purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty will not be weakened.

*Designated Landscapes: Valued and Resilient* outlines key priority areas following consideration of the outcomes from the Review of Designated Landscapes, Future Landscapes Wales Programme and responses to the *Taking forward Wales’ sustainable management of natural resources* consultation. It provides clarity of purpose for the National Parks and AONBs in the context of the UK’s exit from the European Union and at the close of a period of review.

It calls on the designated landscapes managing bodies to deliver on a number of Welsh Government priorities, including the Nature Recovery Plan, a refreshed woodland strategy, the decarbonisation agenda, and Cymraeg 2050. Its ten cross-cutting themes aim to improve resilience and realise the full value of Wales’ landscapes:

* Landscapes for everyone
* Exemplars of the sustainable management of natural resources
* Halting the loss of biodiversity
* Green energy and decarbonisation
* Realising the economic potential of landscape
* Growing tourism and outdoor recreation
* Thriving Welsh language
* All landscapes matter
* Delivering through collaboration
* Innovation in resourcing

Earlier this year, I announced over £3.4million in additional funding for the AONBs and National Parks to support a wide range of projects, including improving access to the outdoors, promoting conservation and regenerating some of their most fragile areas.

I want to provide security of resources for the designated landscapes during these uncertain times. In order to deliver on these priorities, I am reinstating the National Park Authorities’ budgets to last year’s (2017/18) level, which means an additional £1.5million over two years. This is proof of my commitment to them.

This follows a recent announcement from Natural Resources Wales of an additional £1million for the AONB partnerships through a 3 year core grant funding settlement. This is in addition to the £550,000 they are receiving from the Welsh Government over the next two years through the Sustainable Development Fund. I am currently working with them to address issues around parity with National Parks.

With this funding I expect the designated landscapes managing bodies to work efficiently, drawing on collaborative partnerships, to deliver on these priorities and drive forward the sustainable management of natural resources in their areas.

I am committed to ensuring AONBs and National Parks are valued for their natural beauty by our people, communities and country – and, that our designated landscapes deliver rich ecosystems, vibrant and resilient communities and opportunities for outdoor recreation for all of the people of Wales.

*This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.*