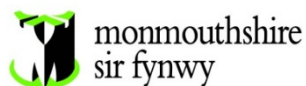


Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

25th October 2018

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

**Monday, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm,
The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford.**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence and Introductions.	1 - 10
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	
4.	Chairman's announcement regarding filming / broadcasting Joint Advisory Committee meetings.	
5.	Public Question Time.	
6.	AONB Management Plan Review.	11 - 14
7.	Wye Valley River Festival.	15 - 18
8.	Wye Navigation Advisory Committee nomination.	19 - 20
9.	Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).	21 - 34
10.	Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.	35 - 40
10.1.	Valued and Resilient.	41 - 56
11.	Designated Landscapes Review in England.	57 - 58
11.1.	Landscapes review call for evidence.	59 - 64
12.	Lower Wye Catchments Green Infrastructure & Natural Flood Management Project.	65 - 66

12.1.	Project area map.	67 - 68
13.	Former Railway Bridges.	69 - 70
14.	AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback.	71 - 72
15.	NAAONB update.	73 - 76
15.1.	Chairman's conference programme.	77 - 78
16.	AONB / Partner progress updates.	79 - 82
17.	Meetings for 2019 - To be held at the Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford, commencing at 2.00pm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th March 2019. • 1st July 2019. • 4th November 2019. 	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Local Authority Members with Voting Powers

Gloucestershire:

T. Hale

P. Molyneux

Herefordshire:

P. Cutter

B. Durkin

J. Hardwick

E.J. Swinglehurst

Monmouthshire:

L. Jones

D. Dovey

M. Lane

A.E. Webb

Forest of Dean:

G. Davies

B. Hogan

Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers

C. Evers – Gloucestershire Association of Parish / Town Councils

R. Gething – Herefordshire Association Local Councils

Councillor G. Powell – One Voice Wales

Co-opted Members with Voting Powers

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire

B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire

A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire

R. Goodwin – Country Land and Business Association

M. Price – National Farmers Union

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

L. Taylor – The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

C. Barron – Wye Valley Society

R. Hesketh – River Wye Preservation Trust

A. Lee – Recreation Sector

D. Broadbent – Local Tourism Sector

A. Nixon – Local Wildlife Trusts

D. Price – National Farmers Union Wales

Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

This page is intentionally left blank

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday,
2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor: P. Cutter (Chair) (Herefordshire Council)

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: D. Dovey and M. Lane

Gloucestershire County Council

County Councillor T. Hale and P. Molyneux

Herefordshire Council

Councillors J. Hardwick and E.J. Swinglehurst

Forest of Dean District Council

Councillors G. Davies and B. Hogan

Town / Parish Community Councils with voting powers

GAPTC – Mr. C. Evers

HALC – Mr. R. Gething

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire – Mr. A. Thomas

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society – Mr. C. Barron

Recreation Sector – Mr. A. Lee

River Wye Preservation Trust – Mr. R. Hesketh

National Farmers Union Wales – Mr. D. Price

Technical Advice Officers

Wye Valley AONB Manager – Mr. A. Blake

Monmouthshire County Council – Mr. M. Lewis

Monmouthshire County Council – Mr. R. Williams

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor A. Webb, Councillor H. Molyneux, Mr. M. Price,
Councillor G. Powell and Mr. R. Niblett.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday,
2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

1. Election of Chair

We elected Councillor P. Cutter as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

We appointed County Councillor A. Webb as Vice-Chair.

3. Introduction and New Members

The Committee welcomed Mr. R. Hesketh (River Wye Preservation Trust) and Mr. C. Evers (Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils) to the meeting.

4. Declarations of Interest.

The following Councillors declared interests as Planning Committee Members of their respective authorities in matters that might arise to development control issues:

Councillor P. Cutter
Councillor J. Hardwick
Councillor B. Hogan

5. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meeting dated 5th March 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

6. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

7. AONB Management Plan Review

We received a report outlining the programme for the preparation and publication of the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2015-2020) needs to be reviewed, under the CRow Act Section 89, by the end of 2020.
- The Wye Valley AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2018-2021, signed by the four local authorities, delegates the Management Plan review to the AONB Partnership.
- In due course, the local authorities and the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) will need to decide the extent of Management Plan review required.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- Defra, Natural England and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) have produced outline guidance on the next round of AONB Management Plan reviews. The Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are currently reviewing their own guidance.

We resolved that the Joint Advisory Committee:

- (i) welcomes the delegation by the four local authorities to the AONB Partnership for the preparation and production of the AONB Management Plan by the AONB Unit.
- (ii) endorses the programme for the review of the AONB Management Plan.

8. AONB Good Governance Review - Task Group outcomes and recommendations

We received a report regarding the outcomes of the recent Task Group with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership on the review of the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes'.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Joint Advisory Committee agreed to review the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* through a joint Task Group with Gower AONB Partnership.
- The Task Group met on Tuesday 24th April 2018 at the Wye Valley AONB Office and concluded a number of aspects of 'what we do well' and 'what we could do better'.
- The outcomes of the Task Group were noted and 20 recommendations had been proposed that address the findings of 'what we could do better'.
- There are no significant or radical changes proposed to governance arrangements but there are implications for the future capacity of the AONB Unit to deliver all the recommendations beyond this financial year.

Having considered the report, the following points were noted:

- Current budget projections indicated that the AONB Unit will be unable to finance an information officer post beyond this financial year. However, it is hoped that resources will be found to keep this post.
- In response to a question raised, it was noted that the AONB unit has been feeding into the National Review regarding how to get senior officers within local authorities to be aware of the AONB and the authorities' responsibility for their respective areas of the AONB.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- Local Authorities could be provided with a briefing paper via the AONB Manager following each Joint Advisory Committee meeting with a view to improving communication with local authorities.
- The AONB Unit and the Joint Advisory Committee has, for a number of years, been working to raise the profile of the AONB via important partnerships, conferences and initiatives such as the River Festival. However, there is a need to continue to move forward with regard to this matter.

We welcomed the outcomes of the Task Group meeting of 24th April 2018 and:

- welcomed the identification of 'what we do well'.
- Accepted the 20 recommendations that build on 'what we could do better'.

9. Review of Designated Landscapes

We received a report regarding the on-going Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the forthcoming Review of Designated Landscapes in England.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Welsh Government Minister, Hannah Blythyn AM, wrote to the AONB lead officers in Wales seeking further input into the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.
- The Welsh AONB lead officers are meeting over the summer with Natural Resources Wales, the National Association for AONBs and the Welsh National Parks to collate a response to the Minister's request.
- In January 2018, the Westminster Government published its '25 Year Plan for the Environment', establishing an approach to protect habitats and landscapes in England including undertaking a review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP launched the Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in late May 2018 to be led by writer and journalist Julian Glover.
- The Review panel is scheduled to report back to Government during 2019.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The AONB Manager will report back to the Joint Advisory Committee on the various stages of the review.
- Ways to feed into the review will be investigated.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- The AONB Manager has been invited to speak at the National Conference.
- If AONB's gain similar status to National Parks, concern was expressed regarding the potential loss of local authority control over AONB planning matters. However, the AONB Manager informed the Committee that there are no plans for AONBs to take on planning functions.
- AONBs are generally small, agile units that are very good at delivering services.

We welcomed the continued positive attention on AONBs and to contribute as appropriate to the on-going Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the forthcoming Review of Designated Landscapes in England.

10. Annual Report 2017/18

We received the annual reports for 2017/18 on the achievements of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the contracted Planning consultants for the AONB Unit.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- High standards of achievement were maintained by the AONB Unit and staffing issues were resolved.
- The AONB Unit has levered in nearly £8 for every £1 of local authority contribution during 2017/18.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning Department continued to provide strategic planning advice to the AONB Unit on development issues, preparing appropriate responses where necessary.
- The AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, has made fewer comments on planning applications but has been more involved in pre-application enquiries and Neighbourhood Development Plans during the year.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question regarding consultation, it was noted that the AONB unit is consulted by local planning authorities with regard to planning applications located within the AONB.
- The AONB unit also scrutinise weekly planning application lists to identify planning applications within the AONB for assessment of significant detrimental impact.
- In recent years, it was noted that through various appeals and case law, developers are submitting better planning applications to local authorities.

We welcomed the Annual Reports of AONB achievements for 2017/18.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm

11. Wye Valley River Festival 2018 Initial Feedback

We received a report and presentation regarding the achievements and the initial evaluation of the third Wye Valley River Festival.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The third Wye Valley River Festival journeyed between Hereford and Chepstow during 5th and 20th May 2018, celebrating nature, culture, landscape and life along the River Wye, and the woods and trees of the Wye Valley.
- There were about 30,000 visits or acts of engagement in 30 Wye Valley River Festival events at 25 different venues and only one outdoor event had received any rain.
- The Welsh Government Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, opened the Museum of the Moon at Cadw's Tintern Abbey.
- This third Festival was organised by the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit and the professional Festival Management team with an overall budget of nearly £200,000 working with arts professionals in collaboration with local communities and conservationists.
- A wide variety of organisations and communities supported the Festival including many hours of volunteer time and sizable financial contributions from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council England, Forestry Commission and Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership, Shire Hall Monmouth, Cadw, Environment Agency and a significant range of smaller donations and in-kind contributions.
- A great many people dedicated a huge amount of time and energy to making the Wye Valley River Festival such a broad, innovative and enjoyable series of events.
- A full evaluation of the Festival is being undertaken to appraise lessons learned, as well as a review of the three Festivals held in line with the original business plan.
- Once the evaluation is complete future prospects for any further Wye Valley River Festivals will need to be determined.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- On behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee, the Chair thanked the Wye Valley AONB Manager and his team for organising and facilitating this event and for the hard work that was required in order for the event to take place.
- Thanks were also given to those groups and organisations that supported the River Festival

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm

We welcomed the success of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

12. AONB Partnership Study Tour 2018

We received a report regarding the date and outline programme for the Annual AONB Partnership Study Tour.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- This year, the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour will be held on Friday 21st September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the northern part of the AONB in Herefordshire.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be dispatched shortly.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 15th – 23rd September 2018, which is the fourth year of this week promoting and celebrating AONBs.

We resolved to:

- (i) note the date of Friday 21st September 2018 for the Study Tour.
- (ii) encourage a good attendance on the Tour.

13. Project Grant Applications

We received a report regarding the latest situation in respect of the three grant applications submitted on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has approved funding for a Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure project covering four Wye tributaries in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. A Project Officer will be associated to this, seconded from Monmouthshire County Council.
- Gloucestershire County Council submitted a Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of Lydbrook Black Bridge totalling £1.5million.
- The Wye and Usk Foundation submitted an application for the Water Environment Grant, entitled Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) which includes most of the English part of the AONB.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday,
2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

14. NAAONB Update: Conference 24th - 26th July 2018

We received a report regarding the recent work of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) including the forthcoming Landscapes for Life Conference and Bowland Award.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) has been meeting with DEFRA to discuss the role AONBs play in delivering the DEFRA agenda.
- The theme and dates for the national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference is "Shaping the Long View" on 24th - 26th July 2018 in Canterbury.
- Two representatives from the AONB Partnership are attending the AONB Landscapes for Life Conference and the Wye Valley River Festival is submitted for the Bowland Award.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

15. AONB / Partner Progress

We received a report regarding the activity of the AONB Unit and partners relating to:

- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory – Events had been held earlier in the year with more events scheduled for September 2018 to be held in the Drill Hall, Chepstow. Archaeological investigations at Lancaut are being concluded.
- Farming Awards – Eight farmers entered and have been shortlisted to four. The awards ceremony will be held at the Monmouthshire Show on 7th July 2018.
- mindSCAPE – Big Lottery Funding has concluded. The next phase will incorporate funding via Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership. A handbook of activities has been produced for people to use in providing support for dementia sufferers.
- Youth Rangers – It has been necessary to re-evaluate how to work with the current cohort as attendance has been poor.
- Welsh Government Access Grant – Additional Funding from Welsh Government has been received for access enhancement.
- The Ash Project – The AONB Unit had contributed to a book that has been written regarding Ash Trees due to be published shortly.
- Undergrounding – Work continues with Western Power Distribution.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday,
2nd July, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

16. Next Meetings

Future meetings of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee will be held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford, on the following dates:

Monday 5th November 2018
Monday 4th March 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.37 pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Purpose

To determine the extent of the review required for the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and receive an update on the programme for the preparation and publication of Management Plan.

Recommendation

That the JAC endorses a balanced and proportionate review of the AONB Management Plan which modifies, updates and simplifies the current Plan, but builds on the sound foundation of the existing Plan.

Key Issues

- The current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2015-2020) needs to be reviewed, under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 Section 89, by the end of 2020.
- The Wye Valley AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2018-2021, signed by the four local authorities, delegates the Management Plan review to the AONB Partnership.
- The Management Plan review programme is appended.
- In mid-July Biodiversity, Landscape and Planning officers from the Local Authorities met to discuss the format of the Review.
- The conclusion was that a balanced review is needed which modifies, updates and simplifies the existing Plan, being proportionate but slightly more than a 'light touch' review, while building on the sound foundation of the existing Plan.

Reasons

Biodiversity, Landscape and Planning officers from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire local planning authorities met at the AONB Office on 17th July to discuss the format of the AONB Management Plan Review. Conclusions, in the form of a SWOT analysis, were:

Strengths

- The Plan 'adds value' to funding bids and grant applications.
- The Management Plan has many tried and tested policies which do not need changing.
- The Management Plan 'adds value' to local planning authority decisions and is useful for problematic applications &/or evidence in Public Inquiries.
- Linkages between Special Qualities, Landscape Management Zones and constraints (Activities & Pressures) are useful.

Weaknesses

- The Plan relies on county Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) some of which are now 20 years old.
- Needs to look forward in context of climate change and future land use.
- Document is lengthy, can appear overly complex with lengthy tables, and repetitive in places.
- No obligation on the local authorities to deliver the Plan (although that allows it to be aspirational).

Opportunities

- Make next Plan fully digital, therefore rationalised (and simplified) for on-line viewing.
- the ‘Strategic Objectives’ could be referred to as ‘Policies’ (under section 89 of the CRoW Act).
- Framing needed in context of Climate Change and Well-being.
- Clear ‘strategy’ on “What is not acceptable”.
- More pictures, especially of Special Qualities, and value judgement of ‘good practice’.
- Strengthened proposals/context for AONB Management Plans may be outcome from Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.

Threats

- Being out of step with other legislation and strategic documents such as Well-being Plans, Area Statements and post Brexit agri-environment schemes.
- Getting bogged down in full-blown Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- Divergent proposals and outcomes from Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.

Implications

The above SWOT analysis identifies that the existing Management Plan remains a sound foundation on which to base the next Plan. The core of the Plan is still robust and the timetable difference with other strategies & legislation would seem to make a ‘full review’ more applicable to the preparation of the subsequent Plan (2025-2030). The review of the current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2015-2020) must be complete by the end of 2020. The proposal is for a proportionate and balanced review which modifies, updates and simplifies the existing Plan, but retains tried and tested policies and content as appropriate. Consequently it may be expedient to call this a ‘light touch *Plus*’ review.

The review programme for the Management Plan is attached and will be modified as required and reported to the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) who will oversee the review conducted by the AONB Unit.

The review will involve a wide range of stakeholders and public consultation. Key local authority members and officers will be closely involved in the process. Each local authority will ultimately approve and adopt the final Plan individually under Section 89 of the CRoW Act 2000.

AONB Management Plans fall under the requirements of European Directives on Habitats Regulation Assessments (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA). A Sustainability Appraisal and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will also be undertaken. The Management Plan review programme (attached) will be updated and address, as appropriate, any changed context and priorities as the review progresses.

Background

The CRoW Act 2000 (Sections 89 and 90) require local authorities to publish AONB Management Plans, at not more than five year intervals, which formulate their policy for the management of their AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. The current Management Plan 2015-2020 is available on the AONB website <http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/management-and-guidance/management-plan-2015-2020/>.

APPENDIX 1:

Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Review Programme

Stages and outline timetable for review process.

Update October 2018

TASK	WHO	EXPECTED TIMETABLE	Progress
FORMALITIES AND NOTIFICATION			
Authorisation from local authorities to undertake review on their behalf [CRoW s89(9)]	AONB Unit	June 18	✓
Propose process and timetable of review	JAC	July 18	✓
Notify Natural England & NRW [CRoW s90(1a)]. Other stakeholders – identify any beyond Partnership.	AONB Unit	Oct 18	✓
Announce requirement for SEA, HRA & SA	Partnership	Oct 18	✓
SCOPING			
Evaluation workshop on current Plan.	Partnership	July 18	✓
Discussion of Plan review priorities among AONB Team, TOWP, JAC, Partnership and with key partners.	Partnership	June-Sept 18	✓
Analyse key stakeholders in Management Plan review process	AONB Team	June-Aug 18	✓
Report on impact and strengths/weaknesses of Plan.	AONB Team [TOWP/JAC]	June-Oct 18 [Oct/Nov ?]	✓
Gather information relating to new evidence/ issues	AONB Team	June-Oct 18	□
List and assess relevance of new strategies/ plans in England & Wales	AONB Team	June-Aug 18	□
Collate community views on issues from existing sources	AONB Team	June-Oct 18	
Write scoping report for SEA & HRA, setting context and objectives, establishing baseline evidence and indicators (stage A)	AONB Team	July-Oct 18	

Consult on scoping report for SEA & HRA	With statutory agencies	Nov 18	
Publish update to State of the AONB report	AONB Team	Nov 18	
REVIEW			
Assess individual sections of plan and agree main areas for revisions and structure [CRoW s89(10a)].	AONB Team/ Partnership	June-July 18	□
Undertake specific targeted consultations /participatory workshops with relevant groups	Partnership & wider	July-Oct 18	
Reassess main issues, aims and objectives. Redraft, and discuss with relevant groups.	Partnership	Autumn 18	
Work on topic sections with relevant groups (Working Groups, Area groups, etc) – detailed issues, policies and updated actions.	Partnership	Autumn 18	
Assess effects of objectives, policies & actions and for SEA and develop alternatives. (Stage B) Element of independent review required, inc LA Scrutiny	AONB Team	Winter 18/19	
Collate new draft plan. Prepare Environmental Report for SEA & HRA (Stage C) and non-technical summary.	AONB Team	Winter 18/19	
Approve Draft for Consultation	JAC	March 19	
CONSULTATION & APPROVAL OF FULL PLAN			
Run public consultation on new draft plan and SEA report (Stage D) for 12 week period.	AONB Team/ Partnership	March-May 19	
Consider comments from consultation and amend plan	AONB Team	June-August 19	
Report on consultation and suggested amendments [CRoW s89(10)]	Partnership	August 19	
Send to Natural England & NRW/WG [CRoW s90(1b)] for formal observations	AONB Team	August 9	
Consider comments from formal observations and amend plan [CRoW s90(1c)]	AONB Team	Sept 19	
JAC Endorsement of Adoption Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	TOWP/JAC	Oct/Nov 19	
Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 formally approved by local authorities	Local authorities	Nov-Dec 19	
Design & publication of Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	AONB Team	Early 20	
Send approved Plan to Secretary of State	AONB Team	By March 20	
Publish Statement on how SEA & HRA taken into account and changes.	AONB Team	March 20	
Implement and monitor Plan and its effects (SEA Stage E).	Partnership	March 20+	

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2018 EVALUATION AND 2020+ PROPOSALS

Purpose

To present the Evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and seek endorsement on the future development of the Wye Valley River Festival.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. welcomes the evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and the conclusions and lessons learned
- B. endorses the development process for the future of the Wye Valley River Festival.

Key Issues

- The full evaluation reports of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 have been completed and are available on-line at [Wye Valley River Festival 2018 Evaluation & Reflection Report](#) and [Audience Event Evaluation 2018](#) (NB these are 55 pages and 42 pages respectively).
- There are a number of lessons learned and conclusions in the reports that are being assimilated by the AONB Unit and the Festival Development Team.
- The original Business Plan to run a biennial Wye Valley River Festival in 2014, 2016 and 2018 has been delivered with most targets achieved or exceeded.
- The general consensus is that all three Wye Valley River Festivals to date have been a success, raising the appreciation of the landscape with innovative and entertaining outdoor art.
- The Wye Valley River Festival won The Bowland Award at the national Landscapes for Life conference, voted on by AONBs across England and Wales.
- There is widespread local support to continue with the Festival, although constraints with the current format are recognised. Therefore discussions are being held with key partners and funding organisations looking at the future of the Wye Valley River Festival.
- Visit Wales 'product development' funding has enabled the commissioning of a study on governance options, audience demographics and funding models to inform a new 5 year business plan to take the Wye Valley River Festival forward to 2024.
- The theme of 'Time' is proposed for a Wye Valley River Festival 2020, reflecting the palimpsest nature of the landscape and past, present and future forces for change.

Reasons

The Evaluation and Reflection Report of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 was compiled by the Festival Director and AONB team (weblink above) and concludes that the Festival exceeded its targets and overall was a considerable success. Fuze Research Ltd undertook the independent Festival audience evaluation (Event Evaluation – weblink above). They obtained 356 responses predominantly through face to face interviews at specific Festival events using

iPads and a questionnaire. There were 27 questions with close correlations to the 2014 & 2016 Audience Feedback forms to enable some comparison of data.

Overall 'Good' ratings were given for the following:-

98% for the 'overall visitor experience'

92% for the 'Quality of the art work programmed'

70% "Learnt more about the Wye Valley Landscape",

70% "Been inspired to visit the countryside more" and

65% "Learnt more about woods and trees" which was the theme of the Festival,

This suggests a huge success in achieving a high quality arts & environment festival.

92% of visitors were aware of the Wye Valley being an AONB

The 'Summary of Feedback and Evaluation' is contained in the main Evaluation and Reflection Report (pp36-40).

There are many lessons to be learned, outlined in the evaluation reports. Importantly, the capacity of the Festival team was once again stretched during the Festival fortnight. However, as with the previous Festivals, many of the best innovations were in the engagement processes with local community groups and collaborations with local partners, creating inclusive artistic experiences embedded in the landscape and the place. Greater use of social media also helped build anticipation, awareness and enhanced the local and regional audiences through attracting 'family & friends' to attend.

There is widespread encouragement for the Wye Valley River Festival to continue after the original 3 biennial Festivals. The general feeling is that the momentum and inspiration generated by the Festivals to date should not be lost at this stage. However it is recognised that the management, governance and funding of the 3 Festivals is not a sustainable model that can be carried forward indefinitely. Consequently a tendering process is underway to produce a study of governance, audience demographics and funding models to inform a new 5 year business plan taking the Wye Valley River Festival forward to 2024. The Festival team are simultaneously beginning to explore proposals for a Festival in 2020. Both these pieces of work are enabled by some of the Visit Wales funding granted to enhance the product development of the 2018 Festival.

The Wye Valley River Festival received the national Bowland Award in July 2018 at the annual AONB 'Landscapes for Life' conference. The Award recognises a best project, best practice or outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There were 6 projects nominated and voted on by the Family of AONBs. Several other AONBs have become involved in and hosted landscape scale outdoor arts events and commissions, including with artists that have participated and performed in the Wye Valley River Festivals. The Festival team consider this Award a great vindication of their hard work over the 3 Festivals <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/eventreport/bowland-award-2018-winnerswey-valley-river-festival/>.

Implications

Discussions are taking place with key funders such as Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Canopy, Herefordshire's a Great Place and Visit Wales about the research and development phase that needs to start as early as possible and build up to the main Festival funding applications and the Festival itself.

The proposed theme for a Wye Valley River Festival 2020 is 'Time'. The AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 emphasises that the landscape is the result of the interaction and integration *over time* of people and nature. Hence this relates to all 27 of the identified AONB Special Qualities. The Management Plan uses the word 'time' in 16 places, 'ancient' 42 times, 'historic' 60 times, 'change' 62 times and 'future' 30 times. It is likely the next edition

of the Management Plan, due in 2020, would be equally focused on the palimpsest nature of the landscape and past, present and future forces for change. Therefore the River Festival in 2020 would be an opportune moment to celebrate the significance of ‘time’ in the nature, culture, landscape and life of the Wye Valley.

The Festival team have identified the need to address future sustainability and governance if the Festival is to move forward. Also a new 5 year business plan would need to be produced. Utilising the Visit Wales ‘product development’ funding, a contract is being tendered to deliver work in the following areas to inform the new 5 year Business Plan 2019-24:

1. Undertake a study of the audience demographics of the Wye Valley River Festival, covering the current audience and future potential audiences, with recommendations for developing audiences reflecting the priorities and strategies of key funders.
2. Economic impact analysis to evaluate the net additional spending into both the Welsh and the ‘Wye Valley’ economy as a result of the River Festival, evidenced in line with Visit Wales requirements using the economic calculator.
3. Identify and research a range of models of governance suitable for the Wye Valley River Festival. This will include a critical analysis of the structures, resourcing and accountability of these models, pros and cons and recommendations with a realistic timetable towards attaining any adopted model. The models of governance need to offer realistic alternatives for the Festival and offer best opportunity to maximize future funding opportunities. Case studies of similar work undertaken by other festivals will provide a useful means of comparison.
4. A desktop study of income streams and finance options looking at sources of funding beyond already identified grant funders, and relating to governance models with advice on implanting key recommendations.

This work will include a workshop with key partners and will result in the Wye Valley River Festival becoming more resilient and effective, with a clear road map to navigate the next 5 years of operation. Moving towards and working within a new governance model will create a greater clarity around what the Festival offers partners. Further workshops will be held with partners and participants in developing the 2020 Festival. It is also anticipated that it will move towards the creation of a new management team &/or structure that supports and delivers the Festival beyond 2020.

Background

The Wye Valley River Festival is a Wye Valley AONB Partnership initiative. The Festival is a biennial festival focused on arts & environment with landscape at its heart. The Festival has taken place over 2 weeks and 3 weekends in early May in 2014, 2016 & 2018 and includes a community engagement programme of workshops in the run up to May. By staging magnificent outdoor arts events that captivate and engage, the Festival has celebrated and interpreted the River Wye, the countryside and its communities, using the arts to develop thinking, imagination and understanding, building new audiences and strengthening the vital role that culture plays in the future development and ‘place making’ of this AONB.

The Visit Wales ‘Product Development’ funding was via the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF), supported through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Welsh Government, to improve the visitor experience and create stronger destinations by working together.

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

WYE NAVIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Purpose

To nominate a representative from the AONB Partnership to the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (Wye NAC).

Recommendation

That the JAC nominate the Wye Valley AONB Manager, Andrew Blake, to represent the Wye Valley AONB Partnership on the Wye NAC.

Key Issues

- The AONB Manager has represented the AONB Partnership on the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (Wye NAC) since the establishment of Wye NAC in 2003 and his fifth 3-year term ended on 30th September.
- Several other members of the JAC sit on the Wye NAC in other capacities.
- The Environment Agency (EA) services Wye NAC and has membership guidance which recommends that appointments should not exceed 10 years unless there is good reason.
- The JAC needs to consider who should represent it on Wye NAC for the next three years.

Reasons

The Wye Valley AONB Manager, Andrew Blake, has served five 3 year terms on Wye NAC. The Guidance issued by the Environment Agency make it clear that no appointments should exceed 10 years in total unless there are exceptional circumstances and no appointment should be for more than 3 consecutive terms unless there is good reason.

Implications

There are good reasons why the AONB Manager should continue to represent the AONB on Wye NAC. The continued attendance of an experienced officer as a member of Wye NAC will enhance the Navigation Committee, particularly when there is significant change of other members. Other JAC members sit on Wye NAC representing other bodies and they could be asked to represent the AONB Partnership. However this may reduce the influence of AONB issues on Wye NAC. Alternatively the AONB Development Officer, Nick Critchley, could represent the AONB. He is involved in project development along the river. However he does not regularly attend JAC meetings. It would seem an unnecessary duplication of AONB staff duties for him to also attend JAC.

Background

The Wye Navigation Advisory Committee was established in 2003 following the Wye Navigation Order. The Wye NAC meets twice a year and advises the Navigation Authority, the Environment Agency, about issues along the public right of navigation between Hay Bridge downstream to Bigsweir Bridge. The Gloucester Harbour Trustees are the Navigation Authority for the tidal Wye downstream of Bigsweir.

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Purpose

To inform members of the new guidelines from Welsh Government for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and nominate 3 JAC members to the SDF Assessment Panel.

Recommendation

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes and adopts the new guidelines from Welsh Government for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)
- B. Nominates three JAC members to the SDF Assessment Panel to complement three independent co-opted appointees to the Panel

Key Issues

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and confirmed for 2018/19 and 2019/20 at £55,000 per annum.
- New guidance for the SDF has been issued by Welsh Government (see Appendix 1).
- The SDF Assessment Panel is established as a sub-group of the JAC. It currently has a number of vacancies making this is an opportune moment to review membership.
- The SDF Assessment Panel is made up of public, private and voluntary sector representatives with 2 appointees from each sector to ensure a balance across social, community, economic and environmental interests, with additional officers' support.
- It is proposed that the JAC nominate 3 members, one for each sector, to complement 3 independent co-opted appointees to the Panel.
- The revised Terms of Reference of the SDF Assessment Panel is attached (Appendix 2).
- The current allocation of SDF grants is also appended (Appendix 3) with £13,776 remaining to be allocated in 2018/19.

Reasons

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has been available in the Wye Valley AONB for 18 years in Wales and but was a casualty of austerity in England, where it ran for 10 years. The SDF comes direct from Welsh Government (WG) and is administered by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the SDF Assessment Panel. WG have confirmed that the SDF for 2018/19 and 2019/20 is £55,000 per annum. There is also the opportunity to bid for underspends from other AONBs later in the year, subject to available funds and prospective applications.

The consolidation of environmental and sustainability legislation in Wales around the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Environment (Wales) Act 2016 have led Welsh Government to revise the guidance for the SDF. This is attached in Appendix 1. With the new guidance and some vacancies on the SDF Assessment Panel, it seems an opportune time to refresh the Panel membership.

The SDF continues to be a popular funding source in the Welsh part of the Wye Valley AONB. A Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grant scheme, with a £1000 limit, is also included within the Wye Valley AONB SDF. However due to challenges of match funding and the capacity of community groups, many projects are driven or partly instigated and run by the Wye Valley AONB Unit. The quality of projects from other organisations has sometimes not met with the approval of the SDF Assessment Panel leading to refusal and disappointment on the part of the applicant. Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, works with applicants to ensure that potential projects are as good as possible before applications are presented to the Assessment Panel for determination. It is usually applicants that have had least contact with Sarah who fail to get funding.

Implications

The SDF Assessment Panel has two representatives each for the public, private and voluntary sectors, along with officers from Natural Resources Wales and Monmouthshire County Council. There are currently a number of vacancies on the Panel. Therefore it is proposed that the 3 members from the JAC, one for each sector, are appointed to the Panel. These will be complemented by 3 independent appointees who will be co-opted on to the Panel to provide a good balance across social, community, economic and environmental interests. The current Panel members and the revised Terms of Reference of the SDF Assessment Panel is attached (Appendix 2).

The SDF application form will be modified to better reflect the alignment of the SDF Guidance with the Welsh Government environment and sustainability agenda. This should make it easier for both applicants and the Assessment Panel to evaluate projects against these criteria. Applicants will continue to receive as much help and support as needed in preparing SDF project applications from Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer.

The Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grant scheme will continue to be offered within the Wye Valley AONB SDF. The grant can support a range of landscape enhancement works at a rate of 50% of the total cost of the works up to a maximum of £1,000. The grant is aimed at landowners and land managers, including small-holders, Community Councils and community groups, where biodiversity gains can engage and benefit those who live within the local environment. Larger landowners may also apply for funding. Priority will be given to schemes where there is greatest biodiversity gain and community benefit. Eligible works may include:

- Orchard planting/gapping up
- Hedgerow management
- Drystone wall restoration
- Life sustaining work to veteran trees
- Pollarding, coppicing and activities relating to the promotion or conservation of biodiversity
- Riparian tree management

Background

The revised SDF Guidance ensures that the SDF sits in the context of Wales' new environmental and sustainability legislation. The SDF has been operating in the AONB since 2000 in Wales. A recognised strength of the SDF grant is its flexibility, including the incorporation of the Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement grants.

APPENDIX 1.

GUIDANCE FOR THE AONB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) was established in 2001 by the Welsh Government to support innovative, sustainable projects in Wales's five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Fund is divided equally between these five areas and supports the development of living and working more sustainably in association with enhancing natural beauty, wildlife, culture, landscape, land use and community within the context of the goals and sustainable development principles in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

This paper provides guidance on how the scheme is coordinated by Welsh Government and administered by Local Authorities and AONB Officers in Wales's AONBs.

1. The Purposes

When administering the Fund, AONB Officers should ensure that all projects encompass, but are not confined to, the following purposes:

- i. To explore innovative ways of contributing to the opportunities and challenges set out in the Natural Resource Policy (see below).
- ii. To build capacity in local communities, and to develop and support community-based projects promoting sustainable development objectives.
- iii. To generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability amongst residents and visitors, and facilitate positive behaviour change.
- iv. To deliver and promote the purposes of the AONB and the objectives as set out in the AONB Management Plan.

In delivering on these purposes, projects must also support the AONBs primary purpose:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape

And secondary aims:

- to promote sustainable forms of economic and social development of local communities, and;
- meet recreational demands in line with land use and conservation

2. Eligibility

Local Authorities, voluntary, community, and partnership groups are eligible to apply for funds as long as the proposed project meets the scheme's priorities. Projects should be located within or should directly benefit one or more of the Welsh AONBs.

For organisations to receive funds they should have a formal constitution and a bank account. Private businesses or individuals may also apply on the same basis provided they are able to demonstrate a clear benefit to the wider community and AONB(s). All applications should be subject to the same rigorous assessment procedure. Projects must also comply with any relevant regulatory requirements e.g. planning permission and building regulations.

From time to time SDF can be used to support an aspect of a wider project. In this circumstance the Welsh Government would expect associated risks to be managed. Should

the wider project not complete and the funding allocated has not delivered its purpose, it would be expected that the Local Authority/AONB meets the costs of the project or for the funding to be returned.

3. Welsh Government Priorities

All projects must meet the Welsh Government's current agenda for the environment and sustainability.

The **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** puts in place Sustainable Development Principles which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. There are five things that will need to be considered when demonstrating the Sustainable Development Principles have been applied when administering the Fund. Following these ways of working will encourage collaborative working, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing.

Long Term - The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Prevention - How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

Integration - Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

Collaboration - Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

Involvement - The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Well-being Goals

The seven Well-being Goals show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards. They are a set of goals and the Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. The projects supported will, therefore, need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following:

- **A prosperous Wales**

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- **A resilient Wales**

A nation which maintains and enhances a bio diverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

- **A healthier Wales**

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which

choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

- **A more equal Wales.**

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

- **A Wales of cohesive communities.**

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

- **A globally responsible Wales**

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The **Natural Resources Policy** facilitates the implementation of the ground-breaking **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** and sets out three overall national priorities for the management of natural resources:

- Delivering nature-based solutions
- Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; and
- Taking a place-based approach

It contains the following four headline opportunities associated with our natural resources:

- Supporting successful, sustainable communities;
- Promoting green growth and innovation to create sustainable jobs;
- Supporting a more resource efficient economy; and,
- Maintaining healthy, active and connected communities

Embracing these priorities and opportunities will enable us to tackle our three main challenges:

- Improving ecosystem resilience
- Climate change and the decline in biological diversity
- The UK's Withdrawal from the EU

Priority will be given to projects that deliver against the above opportunities and challenges. The delivery of SDF through partnerships is crucial to ensuring effectiveness in supporting local sustainable development initiatives and projects which encompass joint working with other AONBs/National Parks, the voluntary/community sector, or other partners, should also be prioritised.

4. Awareness

It would be good practice to provide examples of previous and potential projects in the form of a leaflet/guidance to help guide applicants. This can be done by the individual AONBs or collaboratively.

The AONB Officer should send out the guidelines and application forms to the applicant. The guidelines set out the priorities of the scheme and eligibility criteria. These guidelines also strongly advise the applicant to talk through their ideas with the relevant AONB Officer before submitting an application, to ensure that the applicant and their project are eligible for

funding.

5. Application Process

Having first discussed the proposed project with the AONB Officer, the applicant will submit an application. Before the project is discussed by the Assessment Panel, the AONB Officer (in their advisory role) will initially check the application to ensure that:

- i. the application form is complete;
- ii. the individual, group or organisation is eligible to apply;
- iii. the application meets Welsh Government priorities, AONB purposes and the purposes and set criteria of the scheme.

Successful applications will be given a unique reference number consisting of the initial(s) of the AONB(s), followed by chronological numbering, followed by year number of the scheme eg WV12YR1 (Wye Valley, twelfth application received in Year 1).

Once these validation checks have been successfully completed, the application form will be discussed at the next meeting of the Assessment Panel if the proposal is over £3,000, with a recommendation from the nominated officer as to whether the application should be accepted or rejected.

6. Application Assessment

6.1 Assessment Panels

Assessment Panels have been set up for each AONB as subgroups of Joint Advisory Committees (JAC) or Partnerships. Each Panel is made up of a third each of public, private and voluntary representatives to ensure a balance of interests across social, community, economic and environmental sectors. There should be a minimum of three people on a Panel and a maximum of around six, with members being co-opted if necessary to ensure an even balance of interests.

The members of the Panel will elect a Chair. The nominated Local Authority Officer will act in an advisory capacity. A Natural Resources Wales Officer will also sit on each Panel in an advisory and non-voting role. These two advisory officers will normally be in addition to the usual members of the Panel. Members should declare an interest if they have any direct and significant involvement with the proposed project and revoke their voting rights for any vote on that project.

These Panels will meet as necessary. The dates of meetings of the Assessment Panels will be available from the AONB Officer; this will give the applicant an idea of the best time to apply for funding.

Small projects of less than £3,000 will not need to go to the Panel but can be decided through delegated authority from the Assessment Panel to the AONB Officer in discussion with the NRW Officer. At least 60% of the awarded funding should be considered by the Assessment Panel regardless of the level of funding provided. Officer's decisions on applications will be reported back to the Assessment Panel who should be made aware and asked to note all supported projects.

The scheme will operate in accordance with the "Principles of Good Governance" as agreed by the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group and set out in Annex A.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

Other than what has been outlined above, under the "Eligibility" and "Priorities" headlines, the

criteria for the scheme should be agreed by the respective AONB Management team. This criteria will be provided to the applicant as an indication of how their application will be assessed.

The final decision of whether to accept or reject a project is at the discretion of the Assessment Panels within the framework of the agreed objectives and criteria. The Assessment Panel must however ensure there is transparency in their decision making process. They must be accountable for decisions made and will need to be able to provide full justification for all decisions reached.

Applicants will need to be given clear reasons for why their project has been unsuccessful. Officers can work with applicants to consider the comments made by the Panel in order to amend rejected projects for resubmission. If an applicant is concerned about an Assessment Panel decision, this can be addressed through existing Local Authority appeal procedures.

7. Grants

7.1 Type of Grant

The scheme provides project grants; management grants to support staff costs and development grants to provide a catalyst for new action or partnerships. The five AONBs submit claims on a quarterly basis to the Welsh Government Landscapes Team before payment to the Local Authority/AONB unit is made. Claim forms and guidance is also provided by the Landscapes Team.

In exceptional circumstances applicants can apply for a one-off advance payment to meet set up costs at the beginning of the project. This would only be granted provided they can satisfy the Assessment Panel that the project would not proceed without advance payment.

7.2 Rates of Grant Aid

The level of grant support will not usually exceed 75%, but up to 100% will be available in exceptional circumstances. These figures include an element for appropriate overheads of up to 12%. The applicant is normally expected to provide at least 50% of the total budget costs. The source of any match funding should be clearly identified to avoid the possibility of double funding.

Up to 10% of the scheme can be used by Local Authorities to cover costs associated in administering the scheme (e.g. staff costs, postage, administration, servicing Assessment Panels).

In general, the scheme will not provide 100% funding, although, this could be considered by the Assessment Panel in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances would be, for example, when there was a consensus by the members of the Panel that a project fully met the agreed objectives and criteria but the applicant had no other means of securing resources for the project, therefore, without 100% funding from SDF, the project would not proceed. The Assessment Panel will need to justify any funding at 100% to Welsh Government as part of the progress reports submitted.

While there is no set limitation on the maximum or minimum that applicants can apply for, it is anticipated that no single project will take up more than half of the money available for the whole scheme in any year. Applicants can put forward projects which span more than one year of the SDF scheme.

7.3 Match Funding

One of the key objectives of the scheme is to lever in funds from other sources. SDF can be

match funded with, for example:

- i. Private sector
- ii. Lottery Funding (which is not counted as Exchequer funds)
- iii. European Funding
- iv. Landfill Tax
- v. In kind - this could be officer or volunteer time and donations or loan of equipment, buildings, materials etc. Any officer time used as match funding must be recorded on timesheets which will be provided by the AONB Officer.

The volunteer rate for any grants offered will be outlined within the most recent Wales Council for Voluntary Action “Using Volunteer Time as Match Funding” document.

7.4 Transfer of Funds

Welsh Government should be notified of any likely underspend as early as possible. Failure to do so may affect future settlements. If there is underspend in one AONB Local Authority, unspent funds can be transferred to another AONB Local Authority, as long as both parties are in agreement and this is raised with Welsh Government. It is unlikely that large amounts of funds will be carried over into the next financial year, however, this can be considered in exceptional circumstances and only if Welsh Government Officials are notified in advance and provided with a formal application with a detailed rationale.

7.5 Timetable for Claims

Officers are able to submit claims on a quarterly period. As a minimum it is recommended that nominated officers submit claims to Welsh Government in advance of the following dates to cover the associated periods:

1st December to cover period 1st April to 31st October
23rd March to cover period 1st November to 31st March

Nominated Local Authority/AONB officers are required to provide Welsh Government with a summary of information on confirmed projects for the year. A half a page summary for each project should be submitted alongside claim 1.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Local Authority auditors will examine the scheme as part of their usual annual audit. All AONB Officers should satisfy themselves that projects have been carried out in accordance with the scheme guidance as set out in this document and under the Compact Agreement. A sample of the projects will be monitored during the funding period.

8.1 Post Payment Monitoring

Post payment monitoring should cover capital items and physical work on the ground. Local Authorities should monitor projects and ensure that the funding has been spent in accordance with the scheme framework and as set out in the applicant’s proposal. The AONB Officer should record the number of failures and successes against the projects aims. This information will be submitted to Welsh Government in the form of an annual report as outlined below. Post payment monitoring by the Local Authority should be ongoing and continue until well after the end of the scheme.

8.2 Using the Welsh Government Logo

Acknowledging the Welsh Government is an integral part of the contract and conditions of a grant. The following guidance provides a good understanding of how Welsh Government

would like to be acknowledged - http://gov.wales/contact_us/wglogoguide1/?lang=en. Requests for the Welsh Government logo and artwork approval should be made to BrandingQueries@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

9. Reporting

Annual bilingual progress reports will be sent to Welsh Government from the five AONBs by 31 August following each financial year. The end of year report will outline progress against the agreed set of objectives and criteria. The report will also advise on contentious applications dealt with, as well as providing justification for any projects funded exceptionally on a 100% basis.

Reporting is the mechanism by which Welsh Government Officials provide evidence to Ministers on the success or failure of the scheme. It is not for Welsh Government Officials to argue the case for continued funding. Poorly articulated reports will be returned and could put future support of the scheme at risk. Welsh Government Officials are happy to provide feedback on early drafts of the reports.

As part of the reporting system, Local Authorities will be expected to set out what level of support they propose for future years - the level of which will also impact on the future funding considerations of the scheme.

An outline structure of the information required for the annual report is attached in Annex B.

APPENDIX 2.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

ASSESSMENT PANEL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Objectives

- a. The purpose of the Assessment Panel is to decide upon allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) based on applications for the SDF in accordance with the SDF Guidelines. The SDF is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

2. Panel membership

- a. The Panel is a task-group of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and has executive powers and co-opted members.
- b. Membership of the Panel will be based on the thirds principle:- public, private and voluntary sector, to include those with experience through local and regional organisations and embracing a range of interests such as community, business, environmental, wildlife, agriculture, tourism and recreational interests. The current membership of the Panel is appended.
- c. Nominations and co-options to the Panel will be normally for three years.
- d. Nominations and co-options will be endorsed annually by the JAC in March for the forthcoming financial year.
- e. The Panel will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman at its first meeting. In the absence of both, those Panel members present will choose a Chairman for the meeting.
- f. If a member of the Panel has any direct and significant involvement with a proposed project being considered, then they should declare this at the appropriate point on the agenda, and revoke their voting rights for any vote on that project.

3. Meetings

- a. Meetings will be held at least once each year and will be serviced by the AONB Unit.
- b. The quorum for a Panel meeting shall be one-third plus one. However previously submitted comments on an application by a Panel member will be recorded as valid for that item. If at any time the number of members falls below quorum the meeting shall be adjourned.
- c. The order of business at each meeting shall be as follows:
 - to receive any apologies for absence
 - receive disclosures of interest
 - approve the Minutes of the last Meeting
 - dispose of business (if any) remaining from the previous meeting
 - report on progress of approved schemes
 - consider applications for grants
 - receive reports on grant applications fast tracked and /or under £3,000
 - any other business.
- d. Decisions by the Panel shall be made by show of hands with the Chairman having the casting vote, after consideration of any previously submitted comments by absent Panel Members.
- e. The AONB officers in attendance shall keep minutes of each meeting, which shall be circulated to Panel members as soon as possible after each meeting.
- f. The outcomes of the meeting shall be reported to the next meeting of the Wye Valley AONB JAC for information.
- g. A fast track process may be initiated in exceptional circumstances where an application needs to be determined before the next Panel meeting. The application will be circulated to members for comment before a fixed deadline. The determination of the application will be made by the AONB Manager and Chairman based on the comments received. The result will be reported to the next Panel meeting.
- h. Applications of less than £3,000 are delegated to the AONB Manager to determine following endorsement from the NRW officer. The result will be reported to the next Panel meeting.
- i. All decisions shall be communicated to applicants within fourteen working days of the Panel meeting, giving the reasons for the decision. Applicants will have a right of appeal to the Wye Valley AONB JAC.

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Members of the SDF Assessment Panel

Public Sector representatives:

Cllr Mrs Ann Webb: JAC - Monmouthshire County Council,
Former Forest of Dean District Council Cllr David Thomson

Private Sector representatives:

Ms Cathy Meredith: Herefordshire Rural Hub
Andrew Wall: Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association

Voluntary Sector representatives:

Mr Ashley Thomas: JAC - Monmouthshire voluntary conservation sector
vacant

Statutory Agency & Local Authority officers:

Sarah Coakham: Partnerships Officer - Access, Recreation & Funding,
Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Colette Bosley: Principal Green Infrastructure & Landscape Officer,
Monmouthshire County Council

Wye Valley AONB officers in attendance:

Andrew Blake, AONB Manager
Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer

APPENDIX 3.

Code	Applicant	Project Title	SDF Approved 2018/19				
			years		Total	SDF	
			This	Total	Cost	Grant	
WV00 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB	10% Admin	1	1		£5,500	
WV01 YR18W	Sylvia Rimat	Tree	1	2	£24,275	£1,000	5%
WV02 YR18W	AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018	2	2	£238,500	£25,000	10%
WV03 YR18W	Cadw & WVAONB	Tintern Abbey Beacon Technology	2	2	£22,800	£5,000	22%
WV04 YR18W	Arborealists	Exhibition	1	1	£4,439	£1,000	22%
WV05 YR18W	Tintern Festivals	Ways to Peace	1	1	£4,483	£999	22%
WV06 YR18W	WVAONB Partnership	Tintern Japanese Knotweed Project	1	2	£2,325	£1,725	74%
WV07 YR18W	Little Wren	Hedge-laying	1	1	£2,000	£1,000	50%
					£298,822	£41,224.00	30%

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES

Purpose

To inform members of the publication of 'Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks' and the response to the Minister's letter on greater parity between AONBs & National Parks.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the publication of *Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks*.
- B. Endorses the joint response from the Welsh AONB lead officers, National Association for AONBs and Natural Resources Wales to the Welsh Government Minister for Environment addressing greater parity between AONBs and National Parks in Wales.

Key Issues

- *Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks* was published in July 2018 and is intended to bring the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales to a close. The document is attached.
- At the July JAC members welcomed the letter from Hannah Blythyn AM, Minister for Environment to Welsh AONB lead officers, the National Association for AONBs and Natural Resources Wales requesting, by early September, views on how to provide greater parity for AONBs with National Parks in Wales.
- A joint response to the Minister's letter was submitted in late September. The summary is in Appendix 1.
- Officers from the Welsh AONB, the National Association for AONBs and Natural Resources Wales are meeting the Minister to further discuss the response in mid-November.
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is hosting the Designated Landscapes Wales Seminar on 5th-6th November to which the AONB Manager will attend (after this meeting). The programme is in Appendix 2.

Reasons

The 'Marsden Review' of Designated Landscapes in Wales, and subsequent collaborative work through the Future Landscapes Wales programme, correctly highlighted inequalities between AONBs and National Parks, particularly in terms of status, profile and resourcing. Hannah Blythyn AM, Welsh Government Minister for Environment, wrote on 14th May 2018 to the five AONB lead officers in Wales, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the National

Association of AONBs (NAAONB) asking for a collaborative response addressing the provision of greater parity for AONBs with the National Parks in Wales. The Minister is particularly interested in the issues of ‘status’, ‘profile’, ‘resourcing’, and how together they address the delivery of rich ecosystems, vibrant and resilient communities and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The Welsh National Park Authorities hold an annual seminar for members and officers. In 2018 the AONB lead officers were invited to the event hosted by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. This year the seminar has been rebranded as the Designated Landscapes Wales Seminar and AONB lead officers and chairmen invited. The event is hosted by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority on 5th & 6th November. Hannah Blythyn AM, Welsh Government Minister for Environment, is a keynote speaker on 5th November. The programme is in Appendix 2, below.

Implications

Officers from the Welsh AONBs, NAAONB & NRW met several times over the summer preparing a joint response to the Minister’s request. In late September a document was sent to the Minister that focuses on four key areas, providing a coherent approach to raise the profile and status of AONBs and improve their ability to deliver rich ecosystems and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The four areas are as follows:

- Updating and strengthening of the AONB purposes – because the current purposes are limited, the associated duties on public bodies are weak and the proposals would give genuine mandate to activities that AONB partnerships already deliver
- Strengthening and implementing the AONB Management Plans – because the plans are the expression of what needs to happen in the AONBs and are the core organising principle for local delivery of Well-being goals and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
- Improve governance and scrutiny – because the profile and engagement of AONB Partnerships with their local authorities is often low and should better reflect their significance as nationally important designated and protected landscapes
- Focussed and secure resourcing and capacity building – because the current insecure, opportunistic and often ‘hidden’ resourcing position constrains the ability and potential for AONBs to deliver.

Officers from the Welsh AONB, the NAAONB and NRW are meeting the Minister to further discuss the response in mid-November.

Unfortunately the first day of the Designated Landscapes Wales Seminar, including the Minister’s presentation, clashes with this JAC meeting. However the AONB Manager will attend the remainder of the seminar after this JAC meeting.

Background

The Review of Designated Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) in Wales was commissioned by former Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, in 2014 with the independent ‘Marsden Review’ and *National Landscapes: Realising their Potential - The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales* Final Report published in October 2015. The Future Landscapes Wales programme followed, chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM. In May 2017 *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*, was published by Welsh Government as the next stage in the review. *Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government’s Priorities for AONBs & National Parks*, published in July 2018, is intended to bring the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales to a close.

APPENDIX 1.

Greater parity between the National Landscapes of Wales

Summary

This paper has been prepared in response to the letter, dated 14th May 2018, from Hannah Blythyn, Minister for Environment on the issues to be addressed to provide greater parity for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) with the National Parks in Wales, particularly in terms of status, profile and resourcing, and the delivery of rich ecosystems, vibrant and resilient communities and opportunities for outdoor recreation. It is also prepared in the context of the July 2018 statement ‘Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government’s Priorities for AONBs and National Parks’. It is a collective response prepared by the five AONB lead officers in Wales in collaboration with colleagues from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB). The twelve proposals below intend to build on the opportunities outlined in ‘Valued and Resilient’, be straightforward and robust and together address the inequality of status between AONBs and National Parks. They also recognise that there are inequalities between the AONBs in Wales.

‘Valued and Resilient’ identifies a number of key expectations of Designated Landscapes, including “the ability to function effectively at a national level to inform and influence strategic priorities and plans, whilst maintaining a credible mandate and the relationships necessary to deliver within a local area.” Currently AONB teams across Wales, individually and collectively, do not have the capacity to meet all these expectations.

The network of Designated Landscapes in Wales is fundamental to creating the connectivity needed for truly resilient ecosystems. AONBs are a key delivery mechanism for the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, the Environment Act and NRW’s statutory landscape remit, Area Statements and Natural Resources Planning. The opportunity and potential exists for AONBs to act as a focus and deliver place-based management of natural resources, if the capacity of AONB teams is enabled to do this.

We believe the twelve proposals below will address the issues of status, profile and resourcing for AONBs in Wales. The rationale for the proposals is outlined in the subsequent sections.

Status

- A. A second purpose on “Understanding and Enjoyment” be pursued for AONBs at the earliest opportunity in recognition that all AONB partnerships¹ play a major role in delivering opportunities for outdoor understanding, enjoyment and recreation in Wales. In the interim, Welsh Government provides policy confirmation of the ‘supplementary purposes’ for AONBs.
- B. Strengthen the CRoW Act Section 85 ‘Duty of Regard to the purpose of AONB designation’ into a ‘Duty of Regard to the purpose of AONB designation and implementation of the AONB Management Plan’.

¹ AONB partnership(s) with a lower case p, is the generic term used to refer to an AONB Partnership, Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), Joint Committee (JC) or Conservation Board or any other organisation recognised as the lead governance body for an AONB.

- C. Explore the potential for AONB partnerships to become statutory consultees for planning applications.
- D. Welsh Government to make a 'national appointment' to each AONB partnership and these appointees to also sit on the new 'National Partnership for Designated Landscapes' alongside AONB partnership chairs and lead officers.

Profile

- E. AONBs and National Parks to be referred to generally and collectively as the 'National Landscapes of Wales' rather than 'Designated Landscapes' or 'Protected Landscapes', hence the 'National Partnership for Designated Landscapes' would become the 'National Landscapes of Wales Partnership', etc.
- F. The post-Brexit agri-environment and LEADER replacement schemes to be targeted at delivering the AONB Management Plans and AONB partnerships to have a key role in providing advice and support.
- G. The Minister convenes an annual seminar for CRow Section 85 public bodies to share good practice on how they are delivering their 'Duty of Regard to the purpose of AONB designation' and how the AONB Management Plan is being implemented.
- H. The Minister elevates the AONB Management Plans currently commencing their 5 year reviews by providing a Foreword, formal endorsement when adopted and ensuring supporting policy recognition in Planning Policy Wales (PPW).
- I. Welsh Government and NRW to produce data/statistics cut to each AONB as part of existing data and analysis activity, e.g. tourism, agriculture, population, state of environment, designated site condition etc., in order to inform the AONB Management Plans and support clearer understanding of the value, profile and significance of AONBs.

Resourcing

- J. AONB partnerships commissioned and resourced on a long term basis to provide a core AONB staff team with the critical mass and capacity to deliver the AONB Management Plan and the functions outlined in Valued and Resilient.
- K. The National Association for AONBs is resourced to assist Welsh Government with the establishment and servicing of the new 'National Landscapes of Wales Partnership', co-ordinate AONB (& NLW) member training and AONB Performance Monitoring.
- L. Welsh Government, NRW, Local Authorities and NGO's to have the resilience and capacity to deliver Valued and Resilient and the statutory purpose(s) of the National Landscapes of Wales.

APPENDIX 2.

Designated Landscapes Wales Seminar 5th and 6th November 2018

St Brides Spa Hotel, Saundersfoot

Theme – Valued and Resilient: Opportunities for Designated Landscapes

Monday 5th November

11.00 Welcome – **Mrs Gwyneth Hayward, Chair of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority**

11.10 Introduction – **Owain Wyn – Chair of National Parks Wales**

11.15 – **Hannah Blythyn, AM – Minister for Environment, Welsh Government**

12.00 – Lunch

13.00 – **Site Visits – Options to include:**

1. **Work of Saundersfoot Harbour Authority** - a guided tour of developments in Saundersfoot Harbour and other developments in Saundersfoot.
2. **Carew Castle and Tidal Mill** - a guided tour of Carew Castle and Tidal Mill

16.30 – Tea / Coffee

17.00 — Panel Discussion – Realising the economic potential of Wales' Designated Landscapes when faced with the challenge of Brexit

19.30 – Dinner – St Brides Hotel

Tuesday 6th November

9.00 - Introduction

9.15 A challenge for Designated Landscapes from Key Stakeholders on how to deliver **Valued and Resilient: Opportunities for Designated Landscapes**.

Speakers to include:

- Ros Jervis, Director of Public Health, Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Rachel Sharpe, Chief Executive, Wildlife Trust Wales
- Russell De'Ath, Natural Resources Wales

11.45 – Group Discussion and feedback from discussion

13.00 End and Lunch

This page is intentionally left blank



Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government's Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks

July 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Designated Landscapes: Valued and Resilient

Contents.....	1
Foreword.....	2
Summary.....	3
Purpose and Background.....	5
Priorities for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks.....	5
Valued Places.....	6
1. Landscapes for everyone.....	6
Resilient Environments.....	7
2. Exemplars of the sustainable management of natural resources.....	7
3. Halting the loss of biodiversity.....	8
4. Green energy and decarbonisation.....	9
Resilient Communities.....	10
5. Realising the economic potential of landscape.....	10
6. Growing tourism and outdoor recreation.....	10
7. Thriving Welsh language.....	11
Resilient Ways of Working.....	12
8. All landscapes matter.....	12
9. Delivering through collaboration.....	12
10. Innovation in resourcing.....	13
Monitoring Progress.....	14

Valued and resilient

Foreword by Hannah Bythyn AM, Minister for the Environment

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks contain some of the most beautiful, spectacular and dramatic areas of countryside in Wales. These are landscapes of national importance with designation conferring the highest status for the conservation of landscape. Millions of visitors enjoy these special qualities every year.

Recent reviews have demonstrated the appetite to innovate how landscapes are recognised and managed whilst respecting the enduring value of safeguarding the nation's most spectacular areas.



I have already confirmed unequivocally that all the existing designated landscapes will be retained and their existing purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty will not be weakened. The intention of the priority themes in this statement is to improve the integration of the existing purposes, including biodiversity conservation, with the ambition for the sustainable management of natural resources and to grow the population who value these landscapes and the benefits they bring. They are intended to improve the resilience and realise the full value of Wales' landscapes.

I will continue to encourage and support collaborative action aimed at addressing the opportunities and challenges posed by the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, and to address the issues and priorities identified in the State of Natural Resources Report and the Natural Resources Policy.

This statement and the financial settlement for the remainder of this Government term provides a foundation for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks to push on with confidence to shape future landscapes which deliver for Wales.

Summary: Valued and Resilient

This statement contains four goals for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks in Wales.

First, that they are **Valued Places** which reach out beyond traditional audiences and engage a more diverse cross section of Welsh society to feel they have a stake in these national landscapes. Formal partnerships, which provide meaningful opportunities to participate in the preparation of plans and decision-making, need to be established or maintained.

Second, that they contain **Resilient Environments** where the value of nature is enhanced and the decline in biodiversity is reversed. This is important for both its intrinsic value, and to ensure lasting benefits to society. The areas must become exemplars for the sustainable management of natural resources, with the Authorities and partnerships championing action to halt the decline in biodiversity. The Welsh Government will introduce a requirement for pursuing the sustainable management of natural resources in the exercise of functions and the preparation of the management plan. This will mean greater alignment with the contemporary Welsh approach to natural resources whilst respecting the enduring value of their original purpose.

Third, that they support **Resilient Communities**. The relationship between people and the environment has shaped these landscapes and their communities. The economic and social resilience of these communities is integral to the purpose of designation. More needs to be done to develop and refine understanding of local economic resilience and economic opportunities, and for designation to actively support and create opportunities for employment. As important destinations for the visitor economy fit for purpose places and facilities for outdoor recreation, which are consistent in standard with the spectacular landscapes they serve, must be encouraged and provided.

Finally, the AONB partnerships and National Park Authorities must adopt **Resilient Ways of Working**, where they champion collaborative approaches to maximise the benefits and tackle the challenges faced in these landscapes. There should be closer operational arrangements between existing designated areas on a regional and national basis, as well as between the designated landscapes and areas without a statutory designation. The Welsh Government will work with the AONB partnerships to introduce greater parity with National Parks when it comes to status, profile and resourcing. In addition, a National Designated Landscapes Partnership will be established to develop a robust culture of collaboration whilst also providing scrutiny and challenge on designated landscapes' priorities and delivery. At the local level measures to improve diversity and local representation on National Park boards will be supported.

The Welsh Government will reduce the administrative burdens on National Park Authorities and put in place measures which enable resource planning by the lead bodies for the duration of an Assembly Term. This statement, setting out priorities for the remainder of the term is a step in this direction and will inform future strategic grant letters. The National park Authorities, in particular, must increase the level of revenue generated through

appropriate commercial activities whilst remaining true to the core values and purposes of the areas. A consistent and strengthened performance management regime, linked to the evaluation framework for the Natural Resources Policy will be introduced and this will inform formal review points for existing governance arrangements.

Together, the commitments and priorities in this statement, alongside the ongoing financial support, provide a foundation for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks in Wales to be increasingly valued and resilient.

Purpose and Background

Designated landscapes are strategic national assets and are a key delivery mechanism for the Welsh Government's environmental, social and economic ambitions.

The previous Welsh Government statement on National Parks was published in 2007. A consultation on a revised version which included Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) took place in 2013 but wasn't published because of the emerging debates leading to the Well-being and Environment Acts. There followed an independent review into the purpose and governance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks in Wales, chaired by Professor Terry Marsden (Director of the Sustainable Places Research Institute at Cardiff University) followed by the Future Landscapes Programme to explore its recommendations and the case for reform.

Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales was published in 2017 advocating greater recognition for all landscapes and strengthening alignment with the sustainable management of natural resources. The degree to which this required a change to the existing statutory purposes of the designated landscapes and the degree of protection afforded to them prompted significant debate.

The purpose of issuing this statement now is to bring the period of review and reflection to a close and to set out the Welsh Governments' priorities for AONBs and National Parks in Wales.

This statement includes ten cross-cutting priority themes which provide a consistent framework for all designated landscapes and for national stakeholders whose policies and decisions influence designated landscape management. It still provides for flexibility of management and delivery within each area.

Individual AONB and National Park statutory management plans can differ from each other in order to reflect local context and priorities. The priorities are aimed at improving delivery and accountability in ways consistent with the Environment Act and the Natural Resources Policy in Wales.

Priorities for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks

AONBs and National Parks contain some of the most beautiful, spectacular and dramatic areas of countryside in Wales. These are landscapes of national importance with designation conferring the highest status for the conservation of landscape. These special places provide exceptional opportunities to experience the natural environment including National Trails, the Wales Coast Path and open access areas. They also provide opportunities to enjoy a variety of appropriate recreational activities such as mountain biking, mountaineering, canoeing and coasteering. Millions of visitors enjoy these special qualities every year.

The first purpose of National Parks is ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these areas’ and AONBs have a similar statutory purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty. National Parks also have a second purpose to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks. In addition National Park Authorities have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of their local communities.

The designated landscapes are recognised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Category V Protected Areas “where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.”

The Welsh Government believes there is enduring value to the original aims of the designated landscapes. It therefore intends to ***retain the existing purposes of National Parks, along with safeguard of 11A of the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (“Sandford”) and retain the existing purpose of AONB.***

The State of Natural Resources Report shows that none of Wales’ ecosystems are currently showing all the attributes of resilience. Overall, biological diversity is declining, which can be seen by the loss of habitats and species. The extent of some habitats has also declined significantly. This means that unless action is taken, the benefits we derive from natural resources are at risk.

If the environmental challenges Wales faces are to be addressed, the designated landscapes must do more to identify, safeguard and realise the benefits from the public goods they protect for all the people of Wales.

The new legislative framework for Wales is ambitious. ***The designated landscapes’ management bodies must engage fully in exploring its potential to deliver the ‘Wales we want’, and learning what works.*** When natural resources are managed well, communities flourish, wider society and the economy are enhanced and Wales’ well-being is improved. The designated landscapes have the potential to bring their collective experience to bear to halt the decline in nature, whilst recognising the need for economic resilience in our rural communities.

Valued Places

Reaching out beyond traditional audiences and engaging a more diverse cross section of Welsh society to feel they have a stake in these national landscapes.

1. Landscapes for everyone

The intrinsic link between people and place forms an important cornerstone of well-being in Wales. Landscapes in all their forms (rural, urban, coastal, marine, industrial, etc.) shape the feelings and identity of individuals, communities and the nation. Landscapes help people to understand their past. They inform the present and help express society’s collective hopes for the future.

As visual expressions of identity the landscapes of Wales play a significant role in the process of creating a distinct nation. Some are considered iconic, represented in imagery used worldwide to convey messages about Wales' collective identity.

The designated landscapes have an important role to get more people being passionate about the natural environment, to recognise the contribution it makes to the rural economy and the effect it has on the health and quality of life of the people who live in and visit. Beyond this ***broad partnerships should be formally established or maintained, which are enabled and empowered by the managing body to provide meaningful opportunities to participate in the preparation of plans and decision-making*** of these designated landscapes.

While it is important for all sectors of society to experience these designated landscapes, particular focus should be given to children and young families from deprived areas. Action must be taken to ***help to tackle the inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes amongst the poorest in society***. This work will include enhanced outdoor education programmes and volunteering opportunities.

The AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities should recognise the complex and multidimensional nature of social exclusion, seek to promote social inclusion in all AONB and National Park work, seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities and seek to reduce social exclusion in all its forms.

Resilient Environments

Enhancing the value of nature and reversing the decline in biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure lasting benefits to society.

2. Exemplars of the sustainable management of natural resources

There is broad support for the Welsh Government's ambitions for the sustainable management of natural resources. Leading from this is a recognition the designated landscapes' managing bodies are well placed to take this agenda forward in their areas because of the diversity of natural resources found within their boundaries, their experience and expertise, and their extensive connections with communities of interest, including people who live and work within their boundaries. The designated landscapes cover 25% of Wales' land area which make the National Park Authorities and AONB partnerships key partners in the success of delivering on national priorities and achieving the Wales we want to see.

There is also recognition for the opportunities afforded by better aligning the approaches in designated landscapes with the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in light of the UK's exit from the European Union and the impact this could have on land management and rural development. The Welsh Government recognises the need to take a spatial approach to get the most from land, and is proposing an approach where future land management support can be targeted to particular areas. In this context the potential for

National Park Authorities, amongst others, to take an active role in the administration of schemes will be explored.

AONBs and National Parks, which contain a socio-economic dimension, should exemplify approaches to reconciling tensions around competing demands for natural resources. They have established governance and accountability structures and should utilise mechanisms such as the Management Plan and Local Development Plan in this endeavour. The emerging Area Statements offer the opportunity to inform and enhance further the role of landscape scale action.

To support this ambition The Welsh Government will introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity to ***require a National Park Authority to pursue the sustainable management of natural resources in the exercise of its functions.*** A similar duty will be ***applied to the constituent authorities of AONBs relating to their duty to prepare the management plan*** for the area. This will bring the designated landscapes up to date with the contemporary environmental legislation in Wales whilst recognising the enduring value of their original purpose.

3. Halting the loss of biodiversity

The AONBs and National Parks contain some of Wales' most stunning natural beauty, rich in geological and biological diversity.

Changes in the distribution and abundance of plants, animals, and microbes affect ecosystem functions and the capacity of those functions to deliver ecosystem services. Loss of species from ecosystems affect their ability to resist invasion by other species, affect production and nutrient cycling, and affect the reliability and stability of ecosystems. Therefore, biodiversity is essential to sustaining ecosystems that provide the vital services our lives depend on.

Each designated landscape is distinctive in its own way. Each faces significant challenges from the impact of climate change and increasing pressures on the landscape to deliver food, energy, water and to accommodate carbon storage. There has never been a more critical time to rise to the challenge of developing landscape resilience and managing these changes to minimise the negative impacts on landscapes and communities.

The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) indicates that no Welsh ecosystems contain all the necessary attributes of resilience, including those in our designated landscapes. A priority for designated landscapes is to act upon these findings and ensure the management and use of natural resources focuses on maintaining and enhancing the status of their attributes – the connectivity, condition, scale/ extent and diversity. Further action in designated landscapes to address biodiversity decline is therefore necessary to maintain and enhance ecosystem resilience.

Designated landscapes often contain or adjoin designations including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, World Heritage Sites and non-statutory designations like Heritage Coasts. Such protected sites are widely regarded as being central to local, regional and global strategies for the conservation of biodiversity. The health of designated landscapes will be inextricably linked with the improvement of neighbouring landscapes and sites. The extensive nature of **landscape designation provides a mechanism to secure healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems that are managed sustainably and contribute to connectivity between habitats.**

Woodlands for Wales sets out a strong case for woodland expansion and for good woodland management. This strategy sets out the kind of woodland we want, building on the priorities in the Natural Resources Policy which include supporting the development of resilient ecological networks to maintain and enhance the resilience of Wales' ecosystems and increased canopy cover and well located woodland. Creating both new native and new mixed woodlands that can deliver multiple benefits, and to use planting and natural processes to do so, is a challenge which applies equally to the designated landscapes as to the rest of Wales. It is possible to **increase woodland cover whilst respecting the special qualities of these landscapes.**

4. Green energy and decarbonisation

Designated landscapes must **contribute to a sustainable low carbon economy for Wales**, for example, **through enabling the generation of renewable energy at an appropriate scale, water management and carbon sequestration.**

In order to conserve and enhance the outstanding quality of these landscapes, AONBs and National Parks are afforded special protections within the land use planning system compared with the rest of the countryside. This is right. However, it is also right for the Authorities and Partnerships to be challenged to assist Welsh Ministers to discharge the duty under the Environment (Wales) Act to ensure that in 2050 net emissions are at least 80% lower than the baseline set in legislation.

Through careful planning and management these landscapes can play a key role in meeting the challenges of adaptation and mitigation of climate change, achieving energy security whilst creating resilient communities and supporting the environment. **Communities should be supported to bring forward appropriate renewable energy schemes** which have the potential to reduce dependence on carbon based energy and be a source of revenue for the community.

In addition, this Government has an ambition for the Welsh Public Sector to be carbon neutral by 2030. The National Park Authorities, in particular, can demonstrate leadership on achieving a carbon neutral public sector.

Resilient Communities

Supporting the social and economic resilience of communities.

5. Realising the economic potential

The Authorities and Partnerships have a particular opportunity to help realise the economic potential of their communities and to exemplify and promote green growth. There is no barrier to them doing so within the remit of their existing purpose.

The Marsden Review suggested new purposes to include an explicit remit for economic development. This ‘third purpose’ is something the National Park Authorities and some stakeholders have called for in order to shift the perception of a designated landscape to one which is seen to consider more the well-being of communities. The Well-being Goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the principles of the Sustainable Management of Natural resources in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 make the connections between the environment and the economy as a means of pursuing sustainable development and use. While the symbolism of a new economic purpose has not been discounted, there is insufficient evidence that the existing purposes operating within the new Welsh legislative framework are a barrier to practical delivery. For that reason, there will not be a change of this nature now without broader support or when it is clear impediments to delivery can only be overcome through new legislation.

National Park Authorities have a duty to ‘foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within their national park’ and AONB local authorities also have a similar responsibility across the whole of their authority areas. To reflect their national importance the planning system will continue to afford them the highest possible protection from inappropriate development. This does not prevent the designations from playing a key role in facilitating appropriate development whilst maintaining the integrity of landscape quality.

Designated landscape management organisations need to further develop and refine their own understanding of local economic resilience and economic opportunities, and continue to collaborate with other economic development agencies, including local authorities. They should draw on their power to convene local bodies, businesses and groups in order to support and create opportunities for employment.

6. Growing tourism and outdoor recreation

Wales’ natural environment and designated landscapes offer significant opportunity for growing tourism sustainably.

The designated landscapes enhance Wales’ tourism offer. The National Parks in particular are well known tourism destinations and their status provides a strong brand image which extends beyond their boundaries. This brand must be nurtured and its value realised to support local enterprise. There is an opportunity to collaborate across the family of designated landscapes to work with land managers and food producers to improve public awareness of farming welfare standards and promote local produce. Local produce provides opportunities to promote regional character and supports producers and suppliers.

To ***encourage, provide for and manage responsible outdoor recreation opportunities*** is an important role for AONBs and a key remit for Park Authorities. Efforts need to focus on working towards the provision of fit for purpose places and facilities which are consistent in standard with the spectacular landscapes they serve. Programmes must encourage participation and strong links across the sector to ensure harmonious use of the areas and their special qualities.

Communities and the natural environment can benefit more from sustainable tourism and there should be proactive engagement with tourism providers to identify how they can contribute to sustain the natural assets on which their businesses rely including through initiatives such as green apprenticeships and 'visitor giving'.

The development of alternative niche markets through securing and supporting UNESCO Global Geopark, UNESCO World Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status and the International Dark Sky Reserve can help make the most of green and heritage tourism. The acknowledgement through these awards of the international importance and qualities of the Welsh landscape should be harnessed to maximise the economic and education benefits for communities. There is the opportunity to strengthen collaboration between these areas and the designated landscapes, recognising the significant synergy between their purposes. The designated landscape management organisations have the potential to further facilitate engagement between local businesses, local authorities, Visit Wales and third sector groups within and outside of the boundaries to better understand demand and development potential.

AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities should seek to improve travel planning for visitor attractions and increase the use of demand responsive transport.

7. Thriving Welsh language

Like our designated landscapes, the Welsh language is one of the treasures of Wales. It is part of what defines us as people and as a nation. Cymraeg 2050 is the ambition of the Welsh Government to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using Welsh reach a million by 2050. The designated landscapes will have ***an important role to play to increase public awareness of the value of the Welsh language, both as part of our national heritage and as an important skill in modern life.***

Through the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 the constituent authorities of AONBs and the National Park Authorities are required to work towards seven well-being goals, one of which is 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.

The language profile across the designated landscapes varies. In those with strong Welsh-speaking communities, the challenge is to ensure that people have good quality jobs, fulfilling careers and homes so that they can stay, or return to those communities. In other areas, promoting the use of Welsh as a language for the workplace and business will become increasingly important.

Resilient Ways of Working: *Working effectively and efficiently.*

Parity for AONBs with National Parks broadly exists in terms of planning policy but is lacking when it comes to status, profile and resourcing. Both Marsden and Future Landscapes observed this. Whilst I acknowledge the flexibility of governance and partnerships in AONBs may be a strength, it is also a potential weakness in terms of the stewardship of these equally valuable landscapes. Work will continue with AONBs on what changes could usefully be introduced in this area.

8. All landscapes matter

All landscapes have special qualities. The bodies and partnerships with responsibility for the designated landscapes should together ***promote the social, cultural and economic value and sustainable use of all landscapes, working across boundaries*** with Natural Resources Wales and with local partnerships.

This means closer operational arrangements between existing designated areas on a regional and national basis, but also between the designated landscapes and areas without a statutory designation. In this way the designated landscapes can lead efforts to try and test new solutions to environmental and rural challenges. They have the potential and presence to engage rural communities to fully collaborate alongside other partners and authorities in identifying issues, defining success and targeting investment. Best practice exemplars must be shared across rural Wales.

The Welsh Government wishes to see the designated landscapes taking confident strides in managing positive landscape change for the benefit of people and the landscape. This attitude should be evident in all plans, activities, and communication.

9. Collaboration

The AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities are mechanisms for the collaboration and networking required to identify the key challenges in relation to the environment, society and the rural economy and then innovate and identify suitable solutions. To function effectively they must adapt to address national priorities, statutory purposes, local authorities, and local community interests. To this end, the importance of building effective and durable cross-sector networks and partnerships must not be underestimated.

The designated landscapes must exemplify the practice of tackling complex environmental and social challenges through robust local collaboration in a way which maintains and enhances the contribution to the well-being of Wales. This requires the ability to function effectively at a national level to inform and influence strategic priorities and plans, whilst maintaining a credible mandate and the relationships necessary to deliver within a local area.

AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities can support each other through shared identification of problems, joint decision making and multi-stakeholder participation in clarifying sustainable development. However, the Welsh Government believes a helping hand is needed to assist at a strategic level and intends to ***establish a National Partnership to develop a robust culture of collaboration whilst also providing scrutiny and challenge on designated landscapes' priorities and delivery.***

Structures within the AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities must continue to evolve towards a more empowering role for communities and voluntary bodies. Opportunities to enhance the ways local communities and wider stakeholders shape and share in the vision and priorities for each area should be explored. To assist, the Welsh Government will ***support measures to improve diversity and local representation on National Park boards through further member mentoring and shadowing initiatives and introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity to enable Local Authorities to disregard the requirement for a political balance in their appointees*** where this frustrates their ability to appoint members who represent wards within the Parks. It is crucial our public bodies are well-led, inclusive and reflective of Welsh society.

The appropriateness of the current duty for certain bodies to have regard to a statutory designation's purposes has been questioned during the review, with the suggestion it could be strengthened. The argument has logic, but the Welsh Government wants to see more proactive approaches to engagement and collaboration being pursued, which extend beyond the limited number of bodies who fall within scope of this statute.

A collaborative approach in support of an area's special qualities may be achieved more effectively through building relationships and trust, rather than reliance on compliance on a duty to have regard. Both approaches will require parties to understand and appreciate the aspiration for an area and their own impacts and contribution. The designated landscape bodies exist to facilitate the necessary joint endeavour for the management of the landscapes which includes, but extends beyond, those who are caught by the duty to 'have regard'. This also provides an opportunity for the AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities to engage with national stakeholders on strategic issues.

To support this, Natural Resources Wales, as the Welsh Government's statutory advisor on landscape and natural beauty, is expected to forge and promote effective liaison and collaborative working practices with those partnerships and authorities responsible for the designated landscapes. It will also continue to provide advice and evidence across the broad range of competencies at its disposal, and in accordance with its purpose to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are managed sustainably.

10. Innovation in resourcing

Wider partnerships and innovative funding models should be adopted, where resources are attracted and investments influenced to deliver on the sustainable management of natural resources in the area.

The Welsh Government has consistently provided the National Park Authorities with a decent core grant settlement when considered in the context of pressure on public sector spending. It will ***put in place measures which enable resource planning by the lead bodies for the duration of an Assembly Terms*** which will allow focus on delivery and avoid the uncertainties and inefficiencies which creeps in as a result of short term financial settlements. Additional support for pressures and projects on a case by case basis has been supported when the opportunity has arisen; this will continue.

A key function for the Authorities and Partnerships is to seek to galvanise the resources necessary to deliver against designated landscape priorities. The Future Landscapes Wales programme identified different resourcing opportunities:

- Influencing the resources and investments already active in an area
- Attracting resources to support the direct activities of a delivery body
- Attracting resources for specific projects

In addition, ***increasing commercial acumen and subsequent revenue*** is a key challenge for the designated landscapes. There is a clear need to ensure the senior team in each of the areas takes responsibility for commercial performance; that robust plans are in place to increase revenue; and that more is done to collaborate as a family of designated landscapes to both learn from each others' experience and to avoid duplication or competition. The Welsh Government needs to be confident that there is a planned approach which maximises appropriate commercial activities whilst remaining true to the core values and purposes.

The scale and complexity of governance structures have obvious resource implications. Efficiency should be pursued, consistent with effective governance. The Welsh Government intends to ***reduce the administrative costs of National Park Authorities*** by removing them from the audit regime of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and reducing the size of the BBNPA membership from 24 to 18.

Monitoring Progress

Bringing a period of review to a close doesn't mean reverting to business as usual or not looking for better ways to work. The Welsh Government will look to ***introduce formal review points for existing governance*** to remove uncertainty associated with announcing reviews, allow the Welsh Public and stakeholders the opportunity to have their say and through this ensure approaches remain fit for purpose.

The need for measuring output, outcomes, and evaluating impact remains necessary as part of the desire to improve performance, and is of interest to the media and the public in terms of holding government and organisations to account. To ensure that the Authorities and Partnerships continue to be fit for purpose the Welsh Government ***will introduce a consistent and strengthened performance management regime on the impact of designation and the efficacy of administration*** to ensure transparency and accountability. This approach will integrate with the national approach to monitoring the environment which is being developed.

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES REVIEW IN ENGLAND

Purpose

To update members on the Designated Landscapes Review in England and determine how to respond to the 'call for evidence'.

Recommendation

That the JAC welcomes the Landscapes Review call for evidence and establishes a Task Group to prepare a response by the 18th December deadline.

Key Issues

- Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP launched the Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in May, appointing Julian Glover to lead a small advisory panel.
- The advisory panel have simplified the name to the Landscapes Review and have opened a call for evidence. The 'Landscapes Review call for evidence' document is appended.
- The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) has been leading collaboration and liaison with DEFRA and the Review panel prior to the formal consultation and call for evidence.
- It is proposed that the JAC nominate a small Task Group to collate a response to the call for evidence on behalf of the AONB Partnership, supported by the AONB Manager.

Reasons

The Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England, now referred to as the "Landscapes Review" was launched in May, as part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The Review is led by the writer and journalist Julian Glover, supported by an expert panel of advisors consisting of Lord Cameron of Dillington, Jim Dixon, Jake Fiennes, Sarah Mukherjee and Dame Fiona Reynolds.

The advisory panel have been visiting National Parks and AONBs around England over the summer and talking to people who live and work in, visit and care for them. Julian Glover has met with a small group of officers and chairman from various AONBs and the NAAONB. Julian Glover also attended the NAAONB Landscapes for Life conference in July. This has helped the panel gain insights into both the opportunities and the challenges for designated landscapes. The panel are now opening a formal consultation period and call for evidence.

Implications

The Landscapes Review 'call for evidence' is appended and is also available on the DEFRA consultation website: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence>. It asks a series of open questions across a range of issues that is intended to allow people to set out their thoughts. There are 24 consultation questions. The deadline for responses is Tuesday 18th December 2018.

The panel will continue conversations with AONB s and interested parties as the review progresses. The panel members will be visiting more AONBs and Julian Glover is attending the Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference on 29th November as a keynote speaker. The panel has asked the NAAONB for a repeat meeting with DEFRA, Chairs and Chief Executives early in the New Year to have a conversation informed by the call for evidence.

The JAC has the opportunity to make a collective response to the questions. Constituent organisations and interested parties may choose to make their own responses. The NAAONB have been collating 'key asks' from the AONB partnerships and is preparing a 'prospectus' to feed into the call for evidence.

It is proposed that the JAC nominate a small Task Group to collate a response to the call for evidence. In preparation for the Task Group meeting, possibly during the week commencing 19th November, the AONB Manager can prepare and circulate an initial draft response to the questions. The AONB Manager will also attend the Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference on 29th November. Thereafter the response can be refined and circulated again before final sign off by the JAC Chairman &/or Task Group, for submission by the 18th December deadline.

Background

The review of National Parks and AONBs in England was announced in the DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan. The review's purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist these areas, and whether definitions and systems, which in many cases date back to their original creation 70 years ago, are still sufficient. Weakening or undermining existing protections or geographic scope are not considered.

The Review panel is to report during 2019, the 70th anniversary year of the formative National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949. For more information on the Review of Designated Landscapes in England visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

Landscapes review team panel

Landscapes review: call for evidence

October 2018

Contents

Overview 1

Introduction 1

 Confidentiality and data protection information 2

Before anything else 2

Part 1 - Opening thoughts..... 3

Part 2 - Views 3

Part 3 - Current ways of working..... 3

Part 4 - Closing thoughts 4

How to respond..... 4

Overview

The government has asked for an independent review of England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). You can find more about the work of the [review](#) and our [Terms of Reference](#). Already the review team, led by Julian Glover and a panel with a range of experiences and interests, has carried out visits and meetings in many parts of England.

We will do more in the months ahead - but we want everyone to have a chance to contribute, whether you live in a National Park or AONB, run a business in them, enjoy visiting, care about landscapes and biodiversity, or represent an organisation with views that might shape and improve our findings. The questions are a guide: please do not feel you must answer them all – or have to write at great length. We have not set a word length on answers, as we know some people and organisations will want to reply in detail on specific points. However, we ask that where possible you keep each individual answer to no more than 500 words. It is not necessary to reply to every question so please ignore those which you do not think relevant to you. You may find it easier to write your answers elsewhere before pasting them into the text boxes which follow.

Introduction

1. Are you replying as a member of the public or on behalf of an organisation?

- Member of public
- Organisation

2. If you are replying as a member of public

a) What is your name?

b) What is your email address? If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response. We may also use this to contact you further.

c) Please tick all that apply

- I live in a National Park or AONB
- I work in a National Park or AONB
- I visit a National Park or AONB

3. If you are replying on behalf of an organisation or organisations

a) Which organisation(s)?

b) What is your name and position?

c) What is your email address? If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response. We may also use this to contact you further.

4. We would like to be able to use extracts from submissions in our final report. If you would not like them, potentially, to be made public, please tell us here. (Required)

- Yes, I'm content for you to use extracts of my response in the final report
- No, you may not use extracts from my response in the final report

5. We have obligations under freedom of information laws and there is more information below. For the purposes of these laws, would you like your response to be confidential? (Required)

- Yes
- No
- If you have answered yes, please give your reason

Confidentiality and data protection information

Information in responses to this call for evidence may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with the access to information law (these are primarily the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)).

Defra / The Review may publish the content of your response to this call for evidence to make it available to the public without your personal name and private contact details (e.g. name, email address, etc).

If you say 'Yes' you want your response kept confidential, please clearly state what information you would like to be kept confidential and why. This is to help us balance these obligations for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

If you click on 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

Before anything else

6. We would love to know what makes National Parks and AONBs special to you

We invite you to submit a recent picture which sums up what is special to you about our designated landscapes. It could be a place, a person, on a farm or of plants and wildlife. If you submit a photo, you must own its copyright and it may be used in the final report or online. Please tell us if that is OK.

- Yes, you can use my photo online or in the report

- No, you may not publish my photo

Part 1 - Opening thoughts

We would like any opening thoughts on the role played by National Parks and AONBs - you may want to make a more detailed suggestion further on.

7. What do you think works overall about the present system of National Parks and AONBs in England? Add any points that apply specifically to only National Parks or AONBs.

8. What do you think does not work overall about the system and might be changed? Add any points that apply specifically to National Parks or AONBs.

Part 2 - Views

We'd like to hear views on particular issues.

9. What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in nature conservation and biodiversity?

a) Could they do more to enhance our wildlife and support the recovery of our natural habitats?

10. What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in shaping landscape and beauty, or protecting cultural heritage?

11. What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in working with farmers and land managers and how might this change as the current system of farm payments is reformed?

12. What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in supporting and managing access and recreation?

13. What views do you have about the way National Park and AONB authorities affect people who live and work in their areas?

a) Are they properly supporting them and what could be done differently?

14. What views do you have on the role National Park and AONB authorities play on housing and transport in their areas?

Part 3 - Current ways of working

We'd like to ask some specific questions about the way National Parks and AONBs work at the moment.

15. What views do you have on the way they are governed individually at the moment? Is it effective or does it need to change, if so, how?
16. What views do you have on whether they work collectively at the moment, for instance to share goals, encourage interest and involvement by the public and other organisations?
17. What views do you have on their efforts to involve people from all parts of society, to encourage volunteering and improve health and well-being?
18. What views do you have on the way they are funded and how this might change?
19. What views do you have on the process of designation - which means the way boundaries are defined and changed?
20. What views do you have on whether areas should be given new designations? For instance, the creation of new National Parks or AONBs, or new types of designations for marine areas, urban landscapes or those near built-up areas
21. Are there lessons that might be learnt from the way designated landscapes work in other parts of the United Kingdom, or abroad?

Part 4 - Closing thoughts

22. Do you think the terms currently used are the right ones? Would you suggest an alternative title for AONBs, for instance and if so what?
23. The review has been asked to consider how designated landscapes work with other designations such as National Trails, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs). Do you have any thoughts on how these relationships work and whether they could be improved?
24. Do you have any other points you would like to make that are not covered above?

How to respond

Responses to this call for evidence must be submitted online via Citizen Space by 18 December 2018 at:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence/>

If you are unable to submit online, please contact us at landscapes.review@defra.gsi.gov.uk and we will work with you to find a different way of responding.



© Crown copyright 2018

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.3. To view this licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/ or email PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

landscapes.review@defra.gsi.gov.uk

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

LOWER WYE CATCHMENTS (NFM & GI) PROJECT

Purpose

To introduce the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project Officer.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Collaboration Funding has enabled the recruitment of a Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project Officer until Dec 2019.
- The Project Officer is employed by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and seconded to the Wye Valley AONB Unit.
- The project aims to deliver a catchment based partnership approach, covering 4 Wye tributaries and 54km² of the Wye Valley AONB in Monmouthshire (see attached map).
- Chris Radford commenced work as the Project Officer on Monday 8th October.
- The first Project Steering Group meeting is on Monday 29th October.

Reasons

The Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) project takes a catchment approach in 54km² of the Wye Valley AONB, focusing on 4 Wye tributaries between Penallt and St Arvans. It is a partnership between the AONB Unit and MCC with National Farmers Union (NFU) Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW, Monmouthshire Meadows and the Woodland Trust. The intention of the project is to develop practical sustainable solutions addressing land management, water run-off, access and invasive weed issues through an Integrated Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure Strategy. A key focus is on resolving where surface water run-off and flooding impact on people's ability to access and enjoy the countryside.

Implications

Chris Radford has been recruited as the Project Officer, employed by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and based with the AONB Unit in Monmouth. Chris aims to work with landowners, land managers, interested parties and the public to develop practical sustainable solutions to address land management, water run-off, countryside access and invasive weed issues. The post is supported by a project steering group including MCC, National Farmers Union (NFU) Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW, Monmouthshire Meadows, Woodland Trust and the Wye Valley AONB Unit. The Project Officer will be able to draw on technical advice through these partners covering biodiversity, countryside access, farming, forestry,

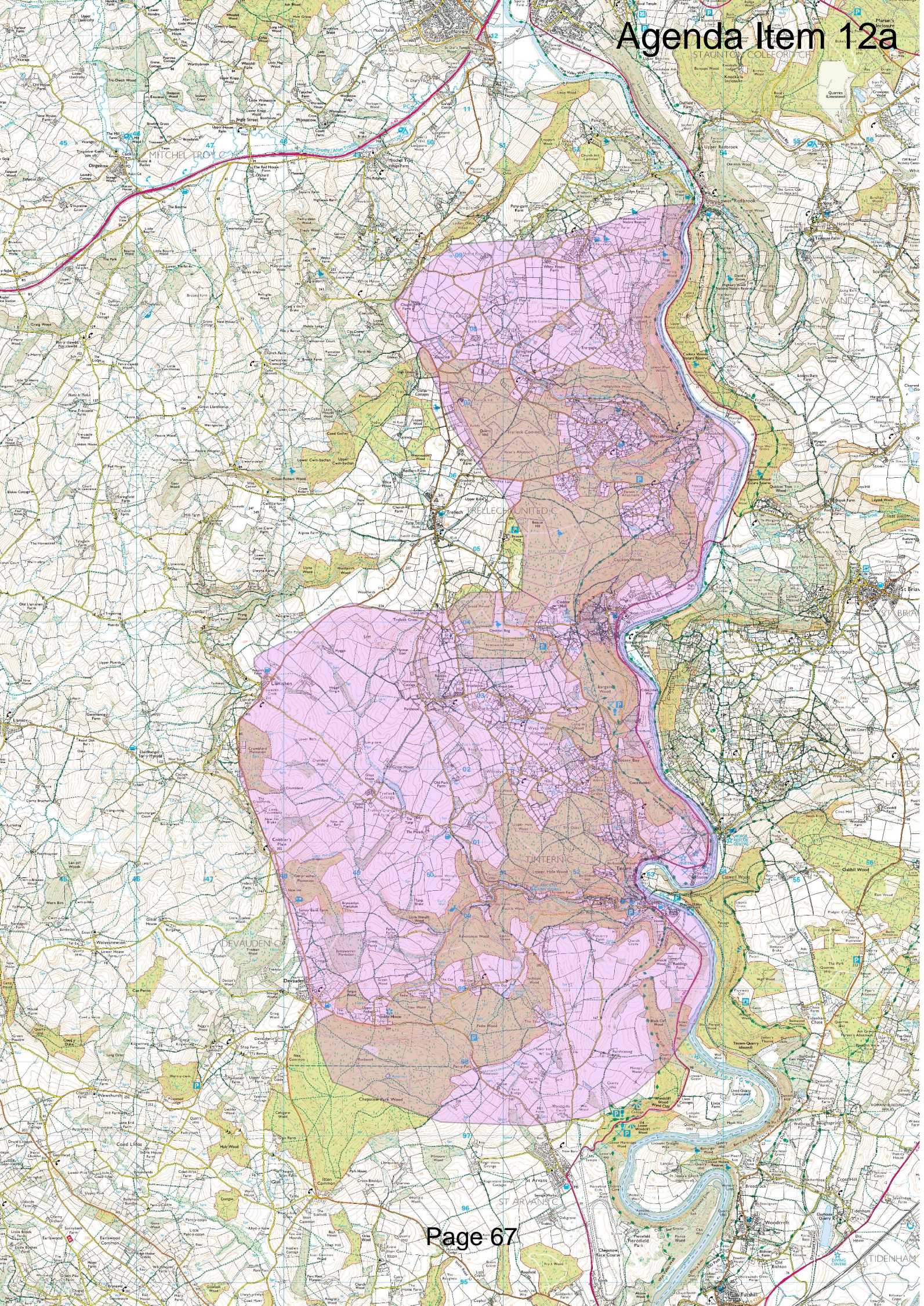
local flood management and natural resource management and other related issues. The Project Steering Group has its first meeting on Monday 29th October.

Landowner and local community involvement will commence shortly. Through the project advice will be available on catchment sensitive farming and natural flood management. There will also be 12 good practice events, walks and talks etc. The project will engage local farmers and NRW's local forestry team about how to deliver a more joined up approach to resolve some of the NFM & GI issues. There is a modest budget to deliver smaller scale actions during the project and/or to support complementary action. The project will also seek to address issues through the development, specification and costing of potential solutions to be delivered through future funding bids.

Background

In 2017 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) launched a collaboration funding stream up to December 2019 to support the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR). The AONB Unit worked with MCC, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Meadows, NFU Cymru, Woodland Trust and NRW to develop a project covering 4 catchments of the Lower Wye Valley. The Lower Wye Valley Catchments Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management project secured £68,000 from the NRW SMNR funding towards a total project of £136,400 until December 2019. The AONB Unit and MCC are contributing £12,600 direct funding towards the project and staff time in-kind estimated at approximately £43,000.

The watercourses in the Project area primarily rise in the rolling, more intensively farmed land on the Trellech Plateau, which leads into more heavily wooded steep valley sides of the Wye Gorge. The land and water management on the Plateau directly effects the volume and rate of flow downstream toward the River Wye and villages of Whitebrook, Llandogo and Tintern.



This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

WYE VALLEY RAILWAY BRIDGES RESTORATION PROJECT

Purpose

To update members on Lydbrook Black Bridge and inform of the situation with the other former railway bridges in the lower Wye Valley.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The condition of three former railway bridges over the River Wye, at Tintern (Wireworks), Redbrook and Lydbrook (Stowfield Viaduct), has been a cause for concern for a number of years.
- In December 2013 the AONB Unit had submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the conservation and restoration of Redbrook railway bridge totalling £1.1million. This was unsuccessful.
- In March 2018 the AONB Manager assisted Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in submitting a Heritage Grant application to HLF for the restoration of Lydbrook Black Bridge totalling £1.5million. The application was also unsuccessful.
- Over the summer GCC have undertaken essential safety work to Lydbrook Bridge and have managed to reopen the bridge by installing a temporary walkway on the bridge structure.
- It is anticipated that if all three bridge structures are not significantly refurbished in the next 10 years they may cease to be usable as footbridges.
- The AONB Unit is investigating a revised partnership approach for the conservation of all three former railway bridges over the River Wye in the AONB to ensure that the bridges remain viable as footbridges for the next 30-50 years.

Reasons

The JAC has previously endorsed its support for projects to refurbish some of the former railway bridges across the Wye. This led to the AONB Unit leading on the Redbrook Bridge HLF application in 2013 and assisting Gloucestershire County Council's HLF application for the Lydbrook Bridge in 2018.

Lydbrook Bridge was closed from February 2016 until September 2018 when Gloucestershire County Council were able to install a temporary scaffold walkway on top of the stripped down railway bridge. For more information see <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-rights-of-way/major-projects/lydbrook-bridge/> Tintern Wireworks Bridge and Redbrook Bridge remain open although there are also issues with the condition of the respective walkways.

Gloucestershire County Council have management responsibility for Tintern (Wireworks), Redbrook and Lydbrook bridges, although all three bridges are cross-boundary and have shared ownership. Gloucestershire County Council carry out regular safety and condition assessments. However, only Wireworks is fully designated as a Public Right of Way although

Lydbrook and Redbrook bridges are strategic crossings for the Wye Valley Walk, a regionally promoted route and key recreational and environmental asset in the area. The Wye Valley Walk and the valley's Railway Heritage are recognised as Special Qualities in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

Implications

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) declined the Lydbrook Bridge application. Having previously rejected the Redbrook Bridge application it appears that pursuing Lottery funding is not a viable solution for the Wye Valley bridges. Therefore a revised approach needs to be taken to conserve the former railway bridges over the River Wye in the AONB.

There are a number of organisations involved with these structures including Gloucestershire County Council (who part own and have management responsibility for Tintern Wireworks, Redbrook and Lydbrook bridges), Herefordshire Council (who part own Lydbrook bridge) and Monmouthshire County Council (who part own Redbrook & Tintern Wireworks bridges, and have an interest along with Sustrans in the Beaufort Bridge in Monmouth), the Environment Agency (as the Wye Navigation Authority upstream of Bigsweir, over which Redbrook and Lydbrook bridges pass) and Gloucester Harbour Trustees (as the Navigation Authority for the tidal Wye downstream from Bigsweir, over which Tintern Wireworks Bridge passes) and the Wye Valley Walk Partnership (which crosses Redbrook and Lydbrook bridges). Private sector interests are also likely from the tourism and walking businesses and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association. The respective local communities will also obviously have an interest.

The AONB Manager is convening the interested partners to investigate options to secure the necessary funds to ensure that the bridges remain viable as footbridges for the next 30-50 years. It is anticipated that if the structures are not significantly upgraded they will cease to be usable as footbridges in the next 10-15 years, with the consequent loss of amenity and access (and heritage) for everyone, and potential hazard to navigation.

Background

The Wye Valley Railway opened in 1876, linking the towns of Chepstow and Monmouth (then both in England). At Monmouth Troy station passengers could change for trains serving the towns of Pontypool, Ross-on-Wye and, from 1883, Coleford. Ultimately the line lost large sums of money and closed to passengers in 1959. The line was used for freight until 1964.

Three former railway bridges over the River Wye, at Tintern (Wireworks), Redbrook and Lydbrook (Stowfield Viaduct) are all now used as footbridges over the Wye. Redbrook and Lydbrook are strategic crossings for the Wye Valley Walk. The bridges are in excess of 130 years' old which exceeds the current required design life of 120 years for a new structure. The existing steel structure to all four bridges is generally in a poor condition, as is the paintwork. The remaining life of the structures as foot crossings is subjective and depends on any future maintenance and repair.

The AONB Unit commissioned a feasibility study in March 2011, undertaken by Atkins, which investigated the re-decking of the Lydbrook and Redbrook former railway bridges for use by walkers, cyclists and/or light private access. In July 2012 the JAC endorsed the investigation of a project to restore the three former railway bridges at Tintern (Wireworks), Lydbrook (Stowfield Viaduct) and Penallt / Redbrook.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS' WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

FEEDBACK ON AONB PARTNERSHIP STUDY TOUR

Purpose

To feedback on the success of the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- A total of 29 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour on 21st September.
- There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused predominantly on the northern part of the AONB in Herefordshire.
- The tour visited a wide variety of land uses and land management types across the area.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.

Reasons

The AONB Partnership Tour continues to be popular and is a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB particularly to local Ward members, key officers and the Town, Parish and Community Councils. The Tour has always traditionally been held on one of the last Fridays in September.

Implications

Of the 29 attendees on the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour, 13 came from Herefordshire, 7 from Gloucestershire and 4 from Monmouthshire. 7 were JAC members, 3 were local authority officers, 14 were from Town/Parish/Community Councils and 2 others, plus 4 AONB staff.

The 2018 Tour looked at a selection of projects and issues in the Herefordshire part of the AONB north of Ross-on-Wye. The day started with a visit to Hurstans Coronation Meadow, Sollers Hope and an introduction to the Herefordshire Meadows Group. Next stop was a viewing and refreshments at the Canwood Gallery & Sculpture Park, Checkley. After some shenanigans in the lanes, Forestry Commission staff led a walk into Haugh Wood to see some of the SSSI woodland management. Lunch was at The Moon Inn, Mordiford. Afterwards there was a quick visit to Ballingham Court Farm, AONB Farming Award winners in 2008, 2012 & 2018, to view their on-farm anaerobic digester. Next stop was the riverside Tresseck Campsite, Hoarwithy. The final visit was a tour around Harewood Park Estate looking at the restoration work on the Duchy of Cornwall estate parkland and live/work units.

Background

The 2017 Tour looked at a selection of projects and issues between Ross and Lydbrook. The 2016 Tour visited sites in and around Tintern in Monmouthshire.

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS' WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

NAAONB UPDATE

Purpose

To advise members of activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and AGM is on 29th November 2018 and will focus on "The Designated Landscapes Review in England". The AONB Manager will attend.
- The national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference, in Canterbury in July, was attended by the AONB Manager and AONB Community Links Officer.
- The Wye Valley River Festival won the Bowland Award at the 'Landscapes for Life' Conference.
- The NAAONB has received a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Resilient Heritage grant of £164,300 to help develop organisational and professional capacity across the AONB Family through a Future Landscapes Project.
- The AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer will both participate in the professional training 'Taking the Lead' programme as part of the Future Landscapes Project.
- Outstanding Week was 15th – 23rd September 2018 with 65 events held nationally.

NAAONB Chairman's Conference

The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference which will take place on Thursday 29th November 2018 in London. The programme is attached. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, will attend on behalf of the JAC Chairman and represent the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

This year's Chairmen's Conference will focus on "The Designated Landscapes Review in England" and Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan. Lord Gardiner, Under Secretary of State for Environment, will be keynote speaker again, along with Julian Glover, chair of the Landscapes Review panel.

The one-day conference will provide a timely and valuable opportunity to optimise collaboration as part of the Landscapes Review call for evidence. It will also look at the UK's Designated Landscape Family's work as dynamic living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society.

Landscapes for Life Conference 24th -26th July, Canterbury

The annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference took place at the University of Kent, Canterbury from 24th -26th July in association with the Kent Downs AONB. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager and Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, both attended. The theme was "Shaping the Long View" with keynote speakers including Merrick Denton-Thompson, President of the Landscape Institute, and Julian Glover, Chair of the Review of Designated Landscapes in England. The AONB Manager also gave a presentation on the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales. There were also field trip options. Andrew Blake's trip looked at 'New crops and new landscapes' visiting several different fruit farms and new vineyards, considering the landscape impacts and opportunities of these new and novel crops, especially in the context of Brexit and climate change. Sarah visited the North Downs Way National Trail and how the 'Pilgrimage story' using access and tourism can support walking services and experience to secure investment in the landscape and its heritage features. The conference is an excellent networking opportunity with plenty of informed, enthused and energised debate and sharing of experiences and advice.

The Wye Valley River Festival won The Bowland Award at the national Landscapes for Life conference, voted on by AONBs across England and Wales. The Award recognises a best project, best practice or outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There were 6 projects nominated and voted on by the Family of AONBs.

HLF Resilient Heritage grant - Future Landscapes Project.

The NAAONB has received Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) support in the form of a £164,300 Resilient Heritage grant. The grant, made possible by National Lottery players, will fund the Future Landscapes Project. The project will explore how the AONB Family and its national charity can become more resilient and better prepared to address strategic challenges. It contributes to the NAAONB ambition to develop organisational and professional capacity to respond to changing political, policy and fiscal challenges. This positive development will help ensure that the AONB Family can continue to help support the UK's treasured national landscapes and ensure their contribution to the economy and well-being of UK society.

The Future Landscapes Project consists of two complementary elements:

- A review of the sustainability and governance of the NAAONB Charity, investigating the remit, structures, resourcing and accountability of the organisation,
- A professional and personal development programme, 'Taking the Lead' that will be delivered to a cohort of AONB staff to help develop greater collaborative working across the AONB Family. Participants, from across the 38 AONBs in England and Wales, will receive personality profiling and coaching. Topic working groups will then be established to address complex problems facing the AONBs.

Nick Critchley, Wye Valley AONB Development Officer and Sarah Sawyer, Wye Valley AONB Community Links Officer will both participate in the 'Taking the Lead' programme. They join the national cohort of 40 AONB staff who will be taken through a series of workshops on collaborative working and constructive enquiry over the next 9 months. Participants will cascade their learnings into their local teams to improve the resilience of the AONB Family. Through Topic Working Groups, participants will concentrate on finding

solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing AONBs today, and will report back at the Landscapes for Life Conference 2019 to start implementing recommendations.

The support from the National Lottery will help deepen the collaborative working culture across the AONB network of national landscapes. This will enable both the NAAONB Charity and the AONB Family to be well positioned to take full advantage of the opportunities that emerge from the Landscapes Review in England.

Outstanding Week

This is the AONB Family's week (and a bit) long programme of events to help people reconnect with nature by enjoying and being inspired by the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). This year 65 events took place across 19 AONBs from Saturday 15th – Sunday 23rd September.

Background

The NAAONB is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK's AONBs. Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other Protected Areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued. It takes a collaborative and partnership-based approach to working with its membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see: www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Chairmen's Conference

Date: Thursday 29th November 2018

Time: 10.00 – 15.00

Venue: The Stevenson Room, Broadway House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NQ

Theme: Defra's 25 YEP and the Designated Landscapes Review in England

TIMING	ACTION
9.30	Coffee on arrival
10.00	Philip Hygate, NAAONB Chairman – Welcome
10.05	The Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Under Secretary of State, Defra
10.20	Crispin Truman, Chief Executive, CPRE – Strengthening the impact of the designation in planning terms
10.40	Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive, Exmoor NPA – Linking future rural support with Management Plans
11.00	Speaker to be confirmed – Advocates for Landscape
11.20	Q&A with above speakers
11.45	LUNCH
12.45	<p>Imagine - A selection of case studies</p> <p>Tom Munro – This is what we do at a local level – Imagine what we could do if agri-environment funding was directed at Management Plan outcomes</p> <p>Chris Woodley-Stewart – This is what we do for nature conservation - Imagine what we could do</p> <p>Howard Davies – Future Landscapes – A collaboration project – Imagine what we could do if we could improve collaboration between England's Designated Landscape Family</p>
13.15	Julian Glover – an update on the Review Panel's activity
13.30	Q&A and discussion with above speakers
14.00	Break into groups (cabaret style) to consider the challenges raised by the speakers this morning, some of the solutions already being offered by the DLs and what we can achieve by working collaboratively as a DL Family.
14.30	Feedback and discussion in full plenary to make decisive action points to be taken forward
14.55	Closing Remarks from Philip Hygate
15.00	Close

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL OFFICERS' WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th November 2018

AONB & PARTNER REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and Partners, relating to:-

- a. AONB Farming Awards
- b. Marketing of local Wild Venison
- c. mindSCAPE
- d. Offa's Dyke Collaboratory
- e. Undergrounding
- f. Water Environment Grant (WEG)

FOR INFORMATION

a) AONB Farming Awards

2018 was the 11th year of running the Wye Valley AONB Farming Awards. The AONB Unit received seven applications to this year's award, which were shortlisted down to four finalists visited by the judging panel.

The judging panel was made up this year of Andrew Blake (AONB Manager), David Price (NFU Cymru/JAC), Mike Williams (Farming and Wildlife advisor/Wye & Usk Foundation) and 2016 winner Mike Johnson (Broome Farm, Peterstow). The four finalists were:-

- Humble By Nature, Meend Farm, Penallt;
- Gadr Farm, Llangovan;
- Gwent Wildlife Trust; and
- Ballingham Court Farm, Ballingham.

Following visits to all four finalists over a day of judging, it was decided the winner of the awards were Esther and Henry Rudge of Ballingham Court Farm. This was the 3rd time the Ridges have won the Award. The Award was presented on 7th July at the Monmouthshire Show.

Ballingham Court Farm has subsequently been visited on the annual AONB Study Tour, to show the work being undertaken, with particular emphasis on the renewable energy aspects of the farm enterprise.

b) Marketing of local Wild Venison

Funding has been secured through Natural England to deliver training sessions which will progress two of the Recommendations in the 'Feasibility Study Investigating the Production, Marketing and Sale of local Wild Venison in the Lower Wye Valley and southeast Monmouthshire'. These training sessions will be run in the coming months and targeted at

butchers and restaurateurs, promoting the variety of flavour and uses for wild venison, and encouraging promotion of the product to customers.

The report, published in early 2018, highlights eight recommendations, mainly around training and increased understanding, which would help encourage greater supply and consumption of local wild venison.

c) mindSCAPE

Delivery of the mindSCAPE project by the AONB Unit has now finished. BIG Lottery funding for the project ran from April 2014 until the end of March 2018. The AONB Unit were given an additional 6 months to ensure full spend of the BIG Lottery grant. The final project report was submitted at the end of September.

The mindSCAPE group continues to run in Lydbrook, now funded by Arts Council England through their Celebrating Age funding, and run by Artspace Cinderford as part of their Branching Out project. This two year project has enabled the continuation of the existing group, as well as the development of two additional groups being delivered through the mindSCAPE model and ethos but open to all, rather than just those living with dementia, in Newnham and Viney Hill. The project will also work with groups of older people across the Forest of Dean.

Before its completion, the mindSCAPE project produced a resource guide containing considerations to make when putting on an activity along with 12 seasonally appropriate nature and landscape activities. A project evaluation was also undertaken by Dementia Adventure which, amongst other statistics, shows that during the 4 years of the project 96 sessions were run with 55 participants (29 carers and 26 people with dementia).

mindSCAPE is also being delivered in care homes across the Forest of Dean through the Foresters Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme, with Heritage Lottery Funding. Over four years, eight care homes will take part in 10 sessions each, delivered by an arts practitioner, again overseen by Artspace Cinderford. The sessions will also contribute towards the production of care home resource guides. Work in three care homes is complete, sessions in a fourth care home will be completed during late 2018.

d) Offa's Dyke Collaboratory

Two events were held in September connected with the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory. The AONB Manager spoke at a one day conference on 'Offa's Dyke and related medieval linear earthworks' held at the Marches School, Oswestry on Saturday 15th September. The event was organised and hosted by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, one of the co-conveners of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory. It featured talks on historical and archaeological aspects of these important border features, updates on recent excavation work, and discussions from conservation and heritage groups, with perspectives from field archaeologists, academics, local history societies and enthusiasts. The event was followed by an optional guided tour of the excavation of a section of Offa's Dyke at Chirk Castle.

On Saturday 29th September, Tidenham Historical Group hosted a day school at Chepstow Drill Hall about Offa's Dyke in the Tidenham and Chepstow area. The AONB Manager spoke about supporting local heritage in the Wye Valley AONB. Other speakers were Dr Keith Ray, Jon Hoyle, Senior Archaeological Project Officer at Gloucestershire County Council and Mel Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England. In the afternoon there was a short guided walk to explore the Sedbury and Buttington Tump parts of the Dyke.

Following on from the Lancaut Day School in March, an evening event is planned, for Wednesday 28th November, again at Chepstow Drill Hall, to update the public about the most recent findings and conclusions from the archaeological investigations at Lancaut and Spital Meend.

e) Undergrounding

The AONB Unit continues to work with Western Power Distribution and other Protected Landscapes to identify overhead power-lines for undergrounding, targeting those which deliver the greatest landscape benefit.

The Wye Valley is in both the South Wales and West Midlands areas. There are currently schemes in Llandogo, Sollers Hope and Kerne Bridge which are being explored.

Considerable work around landowner consent and wayleaves is still to be carried out before the schemes can be implemented.

In anticipation of further funding during the next price review period from 2023 onwards, the AONB Unit are already identifying potential schemes for consideration by the Protected Landscape Steering Groups.

f) Water Environment Grant (WEG)

The Wye & Usk Foundation, working with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the AONB Unit, submitted an application for the Water Environment Grant, entitled Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR). The bid is for £1,188,905 which includes most of the English part of the AONB as well as the adjacent Garren & Gamber catchment.

The WEG scheme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England. A decision of funding is anticipated in late autumn 2018.

This page is intentionally left blank