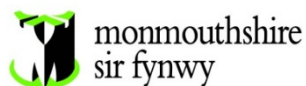


Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

22nd February 2019

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

**Monday, 4th March, 2019 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.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 10
4.	Public Question Time.	
5.	Live Streaming of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee Meetings.	11 - 14
6.	AONB Unit 2019/20 Work Programme.	15 - 24
7.	Sustainable Development Fund Update.	25 - 28
8.	Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.	29 - 34
9.	Review of Designated Landscapes in England.	35 - 36
10.	Wye Valley River Festival 2020+ Update.	37 - 38
11.	National Association for AONBs.	39 - 42
12.	Partner and AONB Unit Progress Reports and Updates.	43 - 46

13.	<p>Dates of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meetings for 2019/20:</p> <p>To be held in the Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Council Chamber, Coleford, commencing at 2.00pm:</p> <p>Monday 1st July 2019. Monday 4th November 2019. Monday 2nd March 2020 (tbc).</p>
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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

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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.

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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,
5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: 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 Councillors: 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

One Voice Wales – Councillor G. Powell

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire – Mr. A. Thomas

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire – Mr. B. Nash

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society – Mr. C. Barron

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

Wye Valley AONB – Mr. C. Radford

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor A. Webb, Dr. G. Peterken, Mr. R. Niblett,, Ms. H. McDowell, Mr. A. Nixon and Mr. R. Hesketh.

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

1. Introductions

The Chair introduced Mr. C. Radford, Lower Wye Catchments Project Officer, to the Joint Advisory Committee.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Joint Advisory Committee members.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meeting dated 2nd July 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Chair's announcement regarding filming / broadcasting Joint Advisory Committee meetings

The Joint Advisory Committee were informed that the Council Chamber now has the facility to film and broadcast meetings. It was agreed that investigations be made to ascertain whether it would be feasible to live stream future meetings of the Joint Advisory Committee and report back to the next meeting.

5. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

6. 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 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.
- In mid-July 2018 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.

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

We resolved that the Joint Advisory Committee 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.

7. Wye Valley River Festival

We received the Evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The full evaluation reports of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 have been completed and are available on-line.
- 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 five 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.

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 the River Festival event and congratulated the AONB Unit on winning the Bowland Award.
- It was noted that it will be the 50th anniversary of the Wye Valley AONB in 2021 and the 200th anniversary of Bigsweir Bridge in 2027. These events will be celebrated and consideration should be given to incorporating these events into future Wye Valley River Festival events.

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

We welcomed the evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and the conclusions and lessons learned and endorsed the development process for the future of the Wye Valley River Festival.

8. Wye Navigation Advisory Committee nomination

We received a report requesting the Joint Advisory Committee to nominate a representative from the AONB Partnership to the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (Wye NAC).

In doing so the following points were noted:

- 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 2018.
- Several other members of the Joint Advisory Committee 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 Joint Advisory Committee needs to consider who should represent it on Wye NAC for the next three years.

We resolved that the Wye Valley AONB Manager, Andrew Blake, represents the Wye Valley AONB Partnership on the Wye NAC.

9. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

We received a report regarding the new guidelines from Welsh Government for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 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.
- The SDF Assessment Panel is established as a sub-group of the Joint Advisory Committee. It currently has a number of vacancies making this an opportune moment to review membership.
- The SDF Assessment Panel is made up of public, private and voluntary sector representatives with two appointees from each sector to ensure a balance across

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

social, community, economic and environmental interests, with additional officers' support.

- It is proposed that the Joint Advisory Committee nominates three members, one for each sector, to complement three independent co-opted appointees to the Panel.
- The current allocation of SDF grants has £13,776 remaining to be allocated in 2018/19.

We resolved:

- (i) to adopt the new guidelines from Welsh Government for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).
- (ii) to nominate three Joint Advisory Committee members to the SDF Assessment Panel to complement three independent co-opted appointees to the Panel. The three Joint Advisory Committee members being:

Councillor A. Webb (Monmouthshire County Council)
Councillor G. Davies (Forest of Dean District Council)
Mr. A. Thomas (Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire)

- (iii) that Mr. D. Price (National Farmers Union Wales) represents the Private Sector on the Panel and that the AONB Manager investigates private and voluntary sector nominations for co-option onto the Panel.

10. Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

We received a report regarding 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 and National Parks.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 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.
- At the July 2018 Joint Advisory Committee, 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 2018, 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 2018.
- Officers from the Welsh AONBs, the National Association for AONBs and Natural Resources Wales are meeting the Minister to further discuss the response on 14th

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

November 2018. The AONB Manager will report back to the Joint Advisory Committee regarding this matter.

- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is hosting the Designated Landscapes Wales Seminar on 5th-6th November 2018 and the AONB Manager will attend part of this seminar.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- It was noted that the review of Designated Landscapes in Wales was coming to a close following five years of review. During this time much had been learned. However, the Designated Landscape review in England was only just beginning.
- The Wye Valley AONB is in a unique position straddling the border between England and Wales. Though there are challenges to be overcome, the AONB tends to make its unique situation work and it is anticipated that it will continue to do so even though the designated landscapes reviews for England and Wales are at different stages of development and may lead to further divergence.
- Cllr Mrs Ann Webb is also attending the Designated Landscapes Wales Seminar as a member of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

We welcomed the publication of Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks and endorsed 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.

11. Designated Landscapes Review in England

We received a report regarding the Designated Landscapes Review in England and determined how to respond to the 'call for evidence'.

In doing so the following points were noted:

- Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP launched the Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in May 2018, appointing Julian Glover to lead a small advisory panel.
- The advisory panel has simplified the name to the Landscapes Review and has opened a call for evidence.
- 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 Joint Advisory Committee nominates a small Task Group to collate a response to the call for evidence on behalf of the AONB Partnership, supported by the AONB Manager.

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

We welcomed the Landscapes Review call for evidence and resolved that a Task Group be established to prepare a response by the 18th December 2018 deadline.

The Task Group will comprise of:

Councillor J. Hardwick (Herefordshire Council)
Mr. C Evers (Gloucestershire Association of Parish / Town Councils)
Mr. B. Nash (Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire)

The AONB Manager will circulate the findings of the Task Group to the Joint Advisory Committee.

12. Lower Wye Catchments Green Infrastructure & Natural Flood Management Project

We received a report regarding the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 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 four Wye tributaries and 54km² of the Wye Valley AONB in Monmouthshire.
 - Chris Radford commenced work as the Project Officer on Monday 8th October 2018.
 - The first Project Steering Group meeting was on Monday 29th October 2018.
 - The Project will be a part of the AONB Partnership Tour next year.
- We noted the report.

13. Former Railway Bridges

We received an update report regarding Lydbrook Black Bridge and the situation with the other former railway bridges in the lower Wye Valley.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 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.

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- 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 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the restoration of Lydbrook Black Bridge totalling £1.5million. The application was also unsuccessful.
- Over the summer of 2018, Gloucestershire County Council has undertaken essential safety work to Lydbrook Bridge and has 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.

Having received the report, the following information was noted:

- A scaffolding structure was installed on Lydbrook Bridge which allowed for the creation of a temporary walkway on the bridge structure.
- The AONB Manager has convened a meeting with bridge engineers from the three county councils to assess the options for the three bridges. The AONB Manager will report back to the Joint Advisory Committee following assessment of the options for the bridges.

We noted the report.

14. AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback

We received feedback on the success of the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A total of 29 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour on 21st September 2018.
- There was good 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.

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, 5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.

We noted the report.

15. National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) update

We received a report regarding activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 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 2018, 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.

We noted the report.

16. AONB / Partner progress updates

We received a report of the activity of the AONB Unit and Partners, relating to:

- AONB Farming Awards.
- Marketing of local Wild Venison.
- mindSCAPE.
- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.

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,
5th November, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

- Undergrounding.
- Water Environment Grant (WEG).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A small amount of funding had been received in England to take forward some of the recommendations arising from the marketing of local wild venison study. This did not include the marketing of wild boar meat due to the limited level of funding.
- An update report regarding the introduction of Pine Martens into the Wye Valley AONB will be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee.
- Ballingham Court Farm had won the AONB Farming awards for the third time. The farm was visited as part of the Joint Advisory Committee tour. Future opportunities to involve Farming Awards winners will also be investigated.
- A Beaver enclosure had been introduced to a location just outside of the AONB in the Forest of Dean. The Joint Advisory Committee could visit this location in the future as part of the tour.

We noted the report.

17. 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:

4th March 2019

1st July 2019

4th November 2019

The meeting ended at 3.17 pm.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

FILMING & BROADCASTING JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Purpose

To consider the opportunity to film and broadcast/webcast the meetings of the Joint Advisory Committee in the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber.

Recommendations

That the JAC does not pursue the opportunity the film and broadcast its meetings at this time.

Key Issues

- The Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) traditionally holds its meetings in the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber
- The Forest of Dean District Council has the facility to film, record and webcast meetings held in the Council Chamber.
- The constituent local authorities of the Wye Valley AONB all have the facility to record and broadcast meetings from their respective Council Chambers.
- Some National Park Authorities also film, record and broadcast their meetings
- However, no other AONB Partnership or JAC is known to film, record or broadcast their meetings.
- The low response to the Public Question time and low public attendance at JAC meetings would indicate that there is currently not much demand for viewing the JAC meetings.

Reasons

With advances in digital camera and recording equipment, many local authorities have invested in the installation of hardware and software to enable the recording &/or filming and broadcasting or live-streaming of meetings. This includes some National Park Authorities. The Forest of Dean District Council has the facility to film and webcast meetings held in the Council Chamber, where the JAC is usually held. The Forest of Dean District Council currently only webcast Full Council and Planning Committee meetings. Monmouthshire County Council broadcast a wide selection of meetings from County Hall at Usk. Herefordshire Council voice-record a range of their Council meetings with the recordings available on their website.

If the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber is not available the JAC has previously met in the Monmouth Town Council Chamber in the Shire Hall, Monmouth. The JAC has also once been held in the Town Hall in Hereford. Neither of these venues currently have filming and broadcasting facilities.

Implications

A brief survey of AONBs was conducted to determine whether any other AONB Partnerships or Joint Advisory Committees record or broadcast their meetings. Of the lead officers that responded on behalf of 12 AONB Partnerships, none of them currently film or broadcast their meetings, for a variety of reasons. Below are a selection of the comments received and reasons given.

“For many years we have rotated JAC meetings around community venues (village halls/institutes etc.) in each district/borough. These venues have very variable (if any) ICT capabilities. We would probably need to move to local authority council chambers, committee rooms etc. to be able to do it. These are often located some distance from the AONB in urban centres, so any move in that direction would take the JAC away from the heart of the matter.”

“We wouldn’t do this – who would watch it? We move meetings around to some places where the IT is not great.”

“Whilst our JAC meetings are occasionally held in other locations most of them take place in the same council chamber so I’m sure we could do this. In the interests of transparency I doubt any one would object. But no one in our JAC has ever asked that we do this”

“Whilst we don't have any plans to film or live stream our Partnership meetings we have with the Partnership's consent for the last 12 months recorded audio of meetings onto mp3. This has been used to aid accurate minute taking and has not been undertaken with the intention of making the recordings publicly available. Our data retention policy means these are deleted after 6 months. ICT at various venues is variable and would prevent live streaming. Emphasis instead has been placed on welcoming groups and members of the public as observers of meetings in our Parishes.”

“We move the JAC meetings around the AONB, the location of the meeting is chosen to showcase an issue or project through a morning walk/ site visit followed by a formal meeting in the afternoon – this means that the venues do not have broadcast facilities.”

“Not felt the need - no one has asked - we used to post minutes on websites but download data demonstrated little demand”

“We have had the opportunity to record and broadcast in the past but did not progress, for two principle reasons;

1. The venue of meetings does change and the facility is not always available
2. Currently we have very open, robust and frank discussions at our board meetings. I am not sure that the quality of these discussions would be maintained if meetings were broadcast.”

“we don't do this, if we did I suspect rather than live transmission we would put it on the website as a video clip and promote through social media links. This would give the opportunity to those who can’t attend to see what was discussed. I wouldn't anticipate a very large audience at all but we send the papers (which are sometimes large files) to over 100 organisations and people and they are not asking to come off the mailing list so I guess the papers are read by some!”

“We do not have the facilities at our regular venues, like others we commonly use village hall locations for our JAC gatherings and tend to move locations. At the moment we

have a very limited number of requests to view our minutes or previous discussions from wider parties, so initially I couldn't see much interest in people wanting to view them.”

The consensus seems to be that there is little demand for such a service, even if it were technically feasible. While the Wye Valley AONB could set a precedent, this is not seen currently as a priority. There are other issues of communication that were identified as priorities in the Good Governance Review last year. Resources should be directed to pursuing those in the first instance. Therefore, it is recommended that the JAC does not pursue the opportunity to film and broadcast its meetings at this time. However, the situation can be kept under review.

Background

The questions asked of AONB lead officers were:

- a) which AONBs already record/film & broadcast their JAC / Joint Committee / Conservation Board meetings?
- b) if not - but where the technology is available - why not?
- c) if not and the technology is not available, would you if you could?
- d) if you don't and you can't...it would still be useful to hear, as a baseline.

Responses were received from the following 12 AONBs; Dedham Vale, East Devon, Forest of Bowland, Isles of Scilly, Kent Downs, Lincolnshire Wolds, Malvern Hills, North Pennines, Quantocks, Shropshire Hills, South Devon and Suffolk Coast & Heaths.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

AONB UNIT WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020

Purpose

To seek members' approval for the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit during the forthcoming financial year.

Recommendations

That the JAC endorses the AONB Unit Work Programme for 2019/2020

Key Issues

- The attached table sets out the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit in the form of the Work Programme 2019/2020.
- During the year it is anticipated that the AONB Unit will shrink from 5.6FTE staff to 4.4FTE and the Work Programme is built to accommodate this 20% decrease in capacity.
- Priorities include progressing the review for the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and continuing a range of existing activities and projects while retaining enough flexibility to pursue new funding opportunities and develop new initiatives.
- The budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by the AONB Steering Group and submitted to DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- This is the final year of a four year core funding settlement with DEFRA and the second year of a 3 year funding agreement with NRW.
- It will be the second year of Welsh Government's confirmed allocation of £55,000 for the Sustainable Development Fund.

Reasons

The main tasks in the year ahead are:

- completing the review for the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025.
- maintaining a high profile for the AONB including developing content on the new website
- progressing funding proposals for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 and testing any proposed new governance and delivery models
- continuing activities such as the AONB Farming Awards and the Youth Rangers and mindSCAPE programmes, both now part funded through the Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership and the Arts Council through ArtSpace Cinderford
- delivering ongoing partnership initiatives, such as the Wye Valley Walk Partnership and the legacy opportunities related to the Overlooking the Wye scheme
- developing and submitting new projects, partnership initiatives and funding bids for the future delivery of the AONB Management Plan including landscape scale partnership

projects, the delivery of the proposed Water Environment Grant programme and supporting the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.

Implications

This is the final year of the DEFRA four year grant allocation (2016-2020) and the second year of a three year grant programme with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Welsh Government continue to provide funding of £55,000 for the delegated AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

The Work Programme 2019/20 accommodates the anticipated 21.5% decrease in capacity of the AONB Unit. This is the result of core AONB staff working on reduced hours to mitigate budget reductions, combined with the completion of the 18 month Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project and the predicted loss of the Project Officer. The AONB Unit with 4.4FTE staff means staffing levels return close to how they were in 2002-2003.

Negotiations are underway with DEFRA and Welsh Government about appropriate levels of funding and staffing for AONBs in the context of the Reviews of Designated Landscapes in Wales and England. However, there is currently no agreed long term security of funding for the core AONB Unit.

Overall the AONB Unit business plan, based on the Work Programme, focuses on maximising the benefits for the local communities, the local economy and the outstanding landscape, while optimising the limited resources available. Best use is made of opportunities for collaboration and maintaining a level of flexibility to lever in additional funding and resources wherever possible.

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Monitor use of Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries etc Undertake Plan Review process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete State of AONB Report Initial consultations, SEA & HRA Scoping 1st Draft of 2020-2025 Plan Public consultation of Draft SEA Environment Report Finalise Plan for JAC & LA adoption 	1,000	<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> <i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</i>	AONBM	Mar 2020
AONB Strategy & Development Advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew contract for year to support AONB Manager with planning advice. Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB Engage in development and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members 	6,000	<i>WV-D1 Ensure a consistent and coherent framework of planning policies relating to the AONB is fully reflected in the statutory land use planning documents and their effectiveness monitored</i> <i>WV-D2 Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and that they complement and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and minimise the impact on the natural environment</i> <i>WV-D3 Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important</i>	AONBM	March 2020
AONB Farming Awards <p>Promote & publicise 12th Awards for farmers, landowners and land managers that make an outstanding contribution to conserving &/or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Awards and handle entries Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing Judging Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show 6th July 2019 Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	1,600	<i>WV-L5 Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB</i> <i>WV-F1 Encourage farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB</i> <i>WV-F5 Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB</i> <i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> <i>WV-E2 Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area</i>	DO	May/ June /July 2019
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)	[55,000	<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create</i>	AONBM/	

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating funds Complete establishment of AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation Training for SDF Assessment Panel 	Welsh Gov + £100k match]	<p><i>the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i></p> <p><i>WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</i></p> <p><i>WV-C1 Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3</i></p>	CLO	March 2020
Website and social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrading and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social networking sites e.g. facebook and twitter. Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk websites. Investigate re-establishing 'Picturesque' as a regular on-line AONB newsletter, to provide information and interpretation to increase awareness and appreciation of the AONB 	4,000	<p><i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i></p> <p><i>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</i></p>	IO/ ALL	Mar 2019
AONB Partnership events For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run AONB Partnership Seminar/forum on key issue Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues Promote & disseminate JAC contacts & processes for other organisations & individuals to feed into JAC & AONB Partnership. 	1,400	<p><i>WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area</i></p>	AONBM/ FAO	Feb 2020
Exhibitions, Activities & Outreach Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands at the Monmouthshire Show and other relevant shows. Local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events. Promote & lead guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills 	1,600	<p><i>WV-E4 Raise awareness of the value of the AONB and the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel</i></p> <p><i>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</i></p>	ALL	Mar 2020

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
courses in and around the AONB				
MindSCAPE Initiative enabling people living with dementia to reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities, both in Care homes & established activity group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage project and submit reports & claims to Foresters' Forest LPS for HLF Supervise contractor, Artspace Cinderford, organising regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities for participants. Develop opportunities to expand project 	3,000 [39,000]	WV-W5 Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate	DO	Mar 2020
Wye Valley River Festival 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop 'Time' theme for Festival with campaign & outreach throughout year. Pursue funding from SDF, England & Wales Arts Council, Cadw, Foresters' Forest, Environment Agency, Monmouthshire County Council and other contributors & sponsors. Complete all claims and evaluations Complete evaluation of future prospects & governance for Festival. Prepare for subsequent Festival governance model (if appropriate) 	10,000 [60,000]	WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness WV-W5 Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape	CLO/ALL	Nov 2019 Mar 2020
Youth Rangers – Foresters' Forest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue structured programme of activity for 4th Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management. Develop the next phase of the scheme and further opportunities to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage 	500 [4,000]	WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB	DO/CLO	Mar 2020
Landscape & Habitat Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise monthly volunteer task days, including on partner sites and Reserves Implement as appropriate the recommendations of the venison marketing feasibility study Continue Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood 	6,000 [50,000]	WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change WV-B2 Encourage and support measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local/key wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition	DO/CLO [NFM& GIPO]	Mar 2020 [Dec 2019]

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<p>Management & Green Infrastructure Project working with farmers and local landowners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunities to continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys to complete coverage of the AONB Liaise over national roadside verge initiatives with local authorities and Highways Agency Continue work with Ross Town Council in co-ordinating management of Ross Riverside. Implementation of Water Environment Grant (WEG) programme – if successful. 	[50,000]	<p>and within robust ecological networks</p> <p>WV-B4 Identify species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the biodiversity value of the AONB and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control</p> <p>WV-W4 Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss</p> <p>WV-W3 Support the development of employment and skills and markets for local timber and woodland produce</p> <p>WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB</p>		
AONB Sub-total	£29,100			
Tasks below covered in AONB Unit costs	£232,127			
<p>Work placements</p> <p>Support the needs of student placements/group projects.</p> <p>Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities</p>		<p>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</p> <p>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</p>	DO / CLO	Mar 2019
<p>Undergrounding</p> <p>Continue working with Western Power to identify power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding, via Western Power South Wales Protected Landscape Undergrounding group and the West Midlands Undergrounding group.</p>	[100,000]	<p>WV-U2 Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected</p> <p>WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRow Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB 3-year work programme</p>	DO	Mar 2019
<p>Landscape scale conservation</p> <p>Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB. Potential target area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate possible HLF bid for northern part of AONB around Woolhope and Sellack area National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others Work with partners in Monmouthshire on Long Forest and Usk to Wye initiatives Continue work with Herefordshire Meadows. Continue &/or expand Lower Wye Catchments 		<p>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</p> <p>WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change</p> <p>WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</p> <p>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB</p>	DO	Mar 2020

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<p>Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project working with farmers and local landowners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Water Environment Grant (WEG) programme – if successful. If not review projects with orchards, veteran & riverine trees. 		<p>designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</p> <p>WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRow Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB 3-year work programme</p>		
<p>Wye Valley Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership Monitor counters along Walk Manage Passport scheme Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge, Redbrook Bridge and Tintern Wireworks Bridge. Progress Monmouth riverbank erosion solutions 	[800]	<p>WV-S1 Encourage and promote the AONB as a sustainable tourism destination with forms of tourism activity and development that are based on the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB</p> <p>WV-S2 Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs</p> <p>WV-R1 Encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities. Associated development and new access to land should be subject to WV-D2 & -D3</p> <p>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</p>	IO, AONBM	Mar 2020
<p>Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give talks/presentations to local groups Regular press releases and magazine articles / advertorial 		<p>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</p> <p>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</p>	ALL	Mar 2020
<p>Partnership</p> <p>Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership Visit Herefordshire Leisure and Recreation Forum. Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Wye Catchment Management Partnership Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Monmouthshire Environment Partnership, Herefordshire Wildlife Link 		<p>WV-R2 Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation</p> <p>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</p> <p>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</p> <p>WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB</p>	AONBM/ DO	Mar 2020

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Wye Valley Woodland Projects group 		WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area		
Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars & events NAAONB Taking the Lead programme & Action/Working Groups Work with Welsh Government and Wales Designated Landscapes in taking Future Landscapes Wales Programme forward Work with DEFRA and Glover Review of Designated Landscapes in England 		WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate	ALL	Mar 2020
Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data, including habitats and species, heritage, tourism and recreation etc. Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan Undertake sample Fixed point photography across the AONB 		WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change WV-B5 Support the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and priority species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres WV-H2 Promote establishment of baseline data to monitor change and improve the local databases of historic landscape assessments, conservation areas, locally important buildings, buildings at risk, ancient trees, heritage features and sites in the AONB in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities, local archaeological trusts and individuals WV-S3 Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the Special Qualities of the AONB WV-P8 Develop and co-ordinate the acquisition and analysis of data across the AONB, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty, including developing a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and supporting mitigation and adaption actions		Mar 2020
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required. Continue implementation of recommendations from AONB Good Governance Review 		WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes	AONBM/ FAO	Jun, Oct, Feb Jan, May 2020
Funding and resources		WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to	AONBM/	

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2019/2020

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue investigating funding and development opportunities. Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects Commence fundraising campaign when Herefordshire Community Foundation Wye Valley AONB Fund established 		<p><i>lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes</i></p> <p><i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</i></p>	DO	Mar 2020
Projects below not identified in bids to Natural Resources Wales and Defra 2019/20				
<p>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological projects and investigation into landscape significance of the 8th century monument</i> <i>Participate in autumn Collaboratory conference</i> 		<p><i>WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations</i></p>	AONBM	Mar 2020
<p>Overlooking the Wye legacy</p> <p><i>Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tintern iBeacon project <i>Interpretation of landscape influence of Tintern Abbey (with Cadw & Monmouthshire LEADER)</i> Reprint of Walks leaflets <i>with sponsorship</i> 	<p>[21,500]</p> <p>[5,000]</p>	<p><i>WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations</i></p> <p><i>WV-H3 Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment</i></p> <p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p>	AONBM/ DO	Mar 2019

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Purpose

To seek members' endorsement of the revised membership of the Assessment Panel for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

Recommendation

That the JAC endorses the new membership of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Assessment 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 2019/20 at £55,000.
- The SDF Assessment Panel is established as a sub-group of the JAC and 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.
- At the previous JAC meeting it was agreed to refresh the membership and appointees to the Panel. The revised Panel membership is appended.
- The current allocation of SDF grants is also appended (Appendix 2) with £2,671 remaining to be allocated in 2018/19.

Reasons

It was agreed at the last JAC that it was appropriate to refresh the SDF Assessment Panel membership, following some vacancies and a revision of the SDF Guidance by Welsh Government.

Welsh Government have confirmed that the SDF for 2019/20 is £55,000. There may also be the opportunity to bid for underspends from other AONBs later in the year, subject to available funds and prospective applications.

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. The revised membership is appended. One place is being retained vacant in the anticipation that a trustee from the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) will join the SDF Panel. This would follow the establishment of a Wye Valley AONB Fund with HCF,

which is currently being progressed. The SDF Panel would then be able to assess applications and advise HCF on the allocation of the AONB Fund.

Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, works with potential applicants to the SDF to ensure that proposed projects are as good as possible before an application is presented to the Assessment Panel for determination. A Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grant scheme, with a £1000 limit, is also included within the Wye Valley AONB SDF. This is also being promoted to landowners by the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Green Infrastructure (GI) Project Officer.

As previously approved, any remaining unallocated SDF at the end of the financial year is transferred to support the Wye Valley River Festival.

Background

The SDF continues to be a popular funding source in the Welsh part of the Wye Valley AONB.

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has been available in the Wye Valley AONB for 19 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.

The establishment of a Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has been previously approved by the JAC as a legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme.

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, Monmouthshire County Council (JAC)

Cllr Gethyn Davies, Forest of Dean District Council (JAC)

Private Sector representatives:

David Price, NFU Wales (JAC)

Antony Smith, Wyastone Estates Ltd.

Voluntary Sector representatives:

Ashley Thomas: Monmouthshire voluntary conservation sector representative (JAC)

tbc – Herefordshire Community Foundation

Local Authority officer:

Colette Bosley: Principal Green Infrastructure & Landscape Officer,
Monmouthshire County Council

Statutory Agency officer:

Sarah Coakham, Partnerships Officer, Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Wye Valley AONB officers in attendance:

Andrew Blake, AONB Manager

Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer

APPENDIX 3. SDF Approved 2018/19

Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant	%
			This	Total			
WV00 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB	10% Admin	1	1		£5,500	
WV02 YR18W	AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018	2	2	£238,500	£26,000	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%
WV08 YR18W	Monmouth Town Council	Monmouth Lantern Parade	1	1	£8,000	£1,000	12.5%
WV09 YR18W	Edward Rodgers	Hedge laying at Trellech Barn	1	1	£2,000	£1,000	50%
WV10 YR18W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Trainees	1	2	£4,426	£900	20%
WV11 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB	Natural Flood Management Farm Advice	1	1	£9,235	£7,200	78%
WV12 YR18W	Chris Trow	Hedgelaying at Elm Farm	1	1	£1,770	£885	50%
WV13 YR18W	Anne Porter	Llanishen church yard	1	1	£240	£120	50%
		TOTALS			£300,218	£52,329	38.4%
		remaining				£2,671	

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES

Purpose

To inform members of the situation with the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the Minister's interest in greater parity between AONBs & National Parks.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Officers from the Welsh AONBs, the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) met with the Welsh Government Minister, Hannah Blythyn AM, to discuss how to provide greater parity for AONBs with National Parks in Wales.
- In December 2018 the Welsh AONB lead officers, NAAONB and NRW submitted detailed proposals to the Minister on the parity issue.
- Following a Welsh Government reshuffle, Hannah Blythyn retains the responsibility for AONBs with National Parks although she has moved from being the Minister for Environment to Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government.
- Welsh Government officers are currently considering the submitted proposals on how to provide greater parity for AONBs with National Parks in Wales. A subsequent meeting is expected shortly.

Reasons

Hannah Blythyn AM, as the then Welsh Government Minister for Environment, wrote in 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 and how together they address the delivery of rich ecosystems, vibrant and resilient communities and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Minister was particularly interested in the issues of status, profile and resourcing for AONBs.

Lead officers from the Welsh AONBs, the NAAONB and NRW submitted a response in September and met the Minister in mid-November to further discuss the issues. At the meeting the Minister requested additional work on a timetable of actions and resource implications to help Welsh Government deliver on 'Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks' (published in July 2018).

Implications

In December 2018 the AONB led officers, NAAONB & NRW submitted proposals to the Minister addressing the issues of status, profile and resourcing for AONBs. This included a timetable and resource estimates, which aimed to achieve greater parity for AONBs with the National Parks in Wales. The total figure was broadly similar to the resourcing of a small National Park in Wales.

At the time of the submission there was a Welsh Government reshuffle but fortunately Hannah Blythyn retained the responsibility for AONBs with National Parks although she moved to be the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government. There was also a turnover of staff at Welsh Government so a new team are currently considering the submitted proposals.

It is anticipated that follow-up meeting with the Minister &/or her officers will be held in the Spring to address the proposals.

Background

The independent ‘Marsden Review’ *National Landscapes: Realising their Potential - The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales* (published in October 2015) highlighted inequalities between AONBs and National Parks. The subsequent collaborative work through the Future Landscapes Wales programme, chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM, and the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*, (published in March 2017) further identified the disparities between AONBs and National Parks, particularly in terms of status, profile and resourcing. These disparities were reiterated in *Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government’s Priorities for AONBs & National Parks* (published in July 2018).

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

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES REVIEW IN ENGLAND

Purpose

To update members on the Designated Landscapes Review in England.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England was launched by Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP last year with a small advisory panel chaired by Julian Glover.
- The 'Landscapes Review call for evidence' closed in December 2018.
- A small JAC task group assisted the AONB Manager in preparing a response on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, provided evidence to a meeting on Volunteering in AONBs and National Parks with Julian Glover.
- Sarah Mukherjee, one of the Review advisory panel members, recently visited the Wye Valley AONB.
- The AONB Manager has provided advice to DEFRA officials on the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and will attend a meeting with Julian Glover and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) in April.
- The Review Panel is expected to present its report to the Minister in Autumn 2019.

Reasons

The Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England was launched in May 2018 as part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The 'Landscapes 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.

A 'call for evidence' was launched in late autumn and closed on 18th December. By Easter Panel members intend to have visited every National Parks and AONB in England to talk to people on the ground.

Implications

The JAC nominated a small Task Group to assist the AONB Manager in collating a response to the 'call for evidence'. The Task Group consisted of Cllr John Hardwick, Colin Evers and Ben Nash. On submission the response extended to over 20 pages. It is believed DEFRA received about 2000 responses.

The NAAONB has worked with AONB Lead Officers, staff, elected members, and key stakeholders to form a national response to the Glover Review. The response offers a good balance of recognition and challenge and will help the Review Panel better imagine the huge

potential of the AONB designation if its future is set within the right policy framework and support mechanisms.

The Panel have been continuing conversations with AONBs and interested parties. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, attended the NAAONB Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference on 29th November at which Julian Glover was a keynote speaker. Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, attended a meeting with Julian Glover on Volunteering in AONBs and National Parks, at which she presented evidence on the AONB Volunteers, the Wye Valley River Festival and the Youth Rangers programme. Andrew Blake has met with, and provided information and advice to, DEFRA officials about the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales. He will also attend a small meeting of AONB lead officers with Julian Glover and the NAAONB in April.

Sarah Mukherjee, one of the Review advisory panel members, visited the Wye Valley AONB on 7th & 8th February. This was an opportunity for her to see the AONB first hand and to get a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the landscape. The itinerary included meeting with a wide range of people including the JAC Chairperson & AONB Staff, Cadw staff at Tintern Abbey, Helen Kenneally (Chepstow Walkers are Welcome), Dr Stephanie Tyler (Monmouthshire Meadows), Neville Hart (Gwent Wildlife Trust), Will Wilding (CreateROSS), Sue Holland (Herefordshire Meadows Group), Hannah Elton-Wall (ArtSpace Cinderford) and Paul Howells (Wyedean Canoes).

Anecdotally the collective responses to the Review from various AONB Partnerships and the NAAONB have been well received by Julian Glover and his Panel members. They consider AONBs ambitious and enthusiastic. The various meetings with the Panel members to date have also been acknowledged as useful and informative and have helped support the general message around the mismatch between current resources and AONB ambitions. DEFRA civil servants are also mindful of the future role AONBs have to play in relation to agri-environment delivery, planning, nature recovery, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, all areas of work that are currently under resourced.

The Review Panel expect to present their report to the Minister in October 2019. It is anticipated that the Government will undertake a Comprehensive Spending Review in the Autumn also.

Background

The review of National Parks and AONBs in England was initially proposed 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 is not considered.

The Review panel is to report in Autumn 2019, during 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>

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2020

Purpose

To inform members of the current situation with the Wye Valley River Festival 2020.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Grant applications to Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council England for the Research & Development phase of the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 have been unsuccessful.
- An initial Creative Camp one-day workshop for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 attracted nearly 40 people and generated many good ideas around the theme of 'Time'.
- The final report is awaited on a study of governance options, audience demographics and funding models to inform a new 5 year business plan to take the Wye Valley River Festival forward.
- Further opportunities and funding bids are being investigated.

Reasons

There has been widespread support and 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, as previously recognised, the current management, governance and funding of the 3 Festivals is not a sustainable model that can be carried forward indefinitely.

A study has been commissioned of governance, audience demographics and funding models to inform a new 5 year business plan to take the Wye Valley River Festival forward to 2024. This was made possible with Visit Wales 'Product Development' funding, 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.

Implications

Initial grant applications to Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council England for the Research & Development (R&D) phase of the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 have been turned down. This is unfortunate but the Festival team continue to explore proposals for a Festival in 2020. A range of additional funding opportunities are being investigated.

Under the Visit Wales RTEF, a ‘Creative Camp’ workshop was held at Wyastone Leys on 31st January. Nearly 40 people attended from a wide range of interests including both artists previously involved in the River Festival and local community representatives from Hereford, Ross, Lydbrook, Monmouth, Llandogo, Tintern and Chepstow. A great many ideas were generated around the theme of ‘Time’. These are being rationalised and prioritised to feed into future funding bids and a nascent potential programme, the outreach engagement with local communities and promotional campaigns.

Discussions are planned with both Arts Council England and Arts Council of Wales on whether funding applications for the main Festival, as opposed to the R&D, are likely to be considered favourably.

Meanwhile the final report on the governance, audience demographics and funding models is awaited. The consultant has been working with the Festival Team through the winter on a range of proposals and possibilities.

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 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. 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.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS' WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

NAAONB UPDATE

Purpose

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

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The AONB Manager attended the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and AGM on 29th November 2018 which focused on "The Designated Landscapes Review in England".
- The AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer are both participating in the professional training 'Taking the Lead' programme as part of the Future Landscapes Programme. The AONB Manager sits on the steering group for the Future Landscapes Programme, which is supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
- The NAAONB has proposed an amendment to the Agriculture Bill and provided DEFRA with proposals for a post Brexit Environmental Land Management Scheme.
- The annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference will take place in Colchester on 9th -11th July.

NAAONB Chairman's Conference

The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference took place on Thursday 29th November 2018 in London. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, attended on behalf of the JAC Chairman and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership. The focus was on "The Designated Landscapes Review in England" and Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan. Lord Gardiner, Under Secretary of State for Environment, and Julian Glover, chair of the Landscapes Review panel, were keynote speakers. There was good attendance from both AONBs and National Parks and robust discussions about the future of Designated Landscapes in England and Wales.

Future Landscapes

The NAAONB secured £165,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Resilient Heritage award towards a £200,000 project that will radically shape the NAAONB as a Charity and the way AONB staff work collaboratively in the future. The Future Landscapes programme started in October 2018 and will run until December 2019. There are two elements; Taking the Lead, a staff development programme, and a Review of the Governance and

Sustainability of the NAAONB. The AONB Manager sits on the steering group for the Future Landscapes programme.

- **Taking the Lead**

Forty staff from AONBs across the country, including the AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer, are part of Taking the Lead. The intention of the programme is to strengthen the professional expertise within AONB teams and the AONB Family so that they are better placed to respond to the political, policy and fiscal challenges that will confront us.

Participants of the programme have all undertaken a self-assessment questionnaire to understand how they work most effectively. They then attended a series of regional workshops to ensure shared objectives can be reached and to identify, address and find solutions to complex problems and help realise opportunities, such as the Review of Designated Landscapes.

They will shortly start Topic Working Groups which will focus on issues and activities that will provide greater resilience to AONBs individually and collectively. Topic Working Groups will specifically be tasked with developing tools and finding solutions that will better position the AONB network to respond to the rapidly changing context.

Those participating in Taking the Lead will acquire skills and insights into problem solving and collaborative working, and are expected to cascade and share newly developed expertise within their own teams and on behalf of the AONB family. The programme will take place throughout 2019.

- **NAAONB Governance and Sustainability review**

The consultancy, Matthews Associates, have been commissioned to undertake a Review of the Governance and Sustainability of the NAAONB. They started their work in November and as one of their first activities they ran a workshop for NAAONB Trustees. In the coming months they will be making contact with members and partners as they formulate recommendations and actions for the NAAONB. The ultimate objective is to develop the NAAONB into a charity with the right purposes, the right governance and having the right people to oversee and deliver activity. This will be critical to securing the longer-term success for our Protected Landscapes. Matthews Associates are due to report in June 2019.

Farming for the Nation tests and trials

The NAAONB submitted to DEFRA the AONB Family proposals for a post Brexit agri-environment scheme “Farming for the Nation: AONBs as test beds for a new Environmental Land Management Scheme”. This proposal included reference to nine tests and trials within AONBs. The crucial link between AONB Management Plans and future farming support was also emphasised. Defra has since indicated that they would like to take the proposal forward for further development, as it aligns with current ELM priorities and will support government policy development. This is a significant step towards a better post-CAP mechanism for supporting farmers and landowners.

The Agriculture Bill amendment

The NAAONB has worked hard, with significant support from the AONB Family, to enable the tabling of what is considered to be a crucial amendment to the Agriculture Bill. This proposed amendment has been tabled by Neil Parish MP for Tiverton and Honiton and seeks to facilitate future farming support being directed towards activity that helps improve landscape quality. The amendment, if incorporated, would then ensure that the mechanics of the Bill are aligned with the delivery of the 25 Year Environment Plan with regard to landscape enhancement. The AONB Manager has raised awareness of the importance of this proposed amendment with the local MPs.

Landscapes for Life Conference 9th-11th July in Colchester, Essex

The 2019 conference will be held over the 9th-11th July in Colchester with the support of the Dedham Vale AONB and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The Landscape for Life Conference 2019 will celebrate the 70 years of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, and provide ample opportunity to share knowledge, learn from each other, and inspire others over the contemporary value of the AONB designation and the wonderful landscapes they represent.

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

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th March 2019

AONB & PARTNER REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and various partners.

FOR INFORMATION

The AONB Manager will update on the following AONB Unit and partners initiatives:-

- a. Ecosystem Services checklist
- b. Fixed Point Photography
- c. Herefordshire Meadows Facilitation Group
- d. Lower Wye Catchments NFM & GI Project
- e. Ross riverside
- f. West Midlands Deer Priority Area

Ecosystem Services checklist

Through the National Association for AONBs, the AONB Unit have taken up the offer of free consultancy support to help embed the Ecosystem Approach in management planning and decision making. Through the completion of a 6 question checklist, participating AONBs are helped to:

- Understand how much they understand about the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services in their landscapes, and what the key knowledge gaps are.
- Link actions to improve and expand biodiversity with the benefits this can provide for people both within and beyond the AONB.
- Review the effectiveness of their Management Plans and Partnerships.

The AONB Manager and Development Officer are currently half way through this process with the consultant. This will be completed by the end of March 2019 and will be valuable for the development of the new Management Plan.

Fixed Point Photography

In Autumn 2018, the AONB Unit designed a programme of fixed point photography to monitor long term habitat and landscape change. Initially, consideration was given to surveying from key viewpoints but many of these are already well photographed and it was thought this would not provide coverage of all AONB landscape types. The AONB Management Plan identifies 16 Landscape Management Zones (LMZs) and it was deemed

important that all LMZs be included in the fixed point photography to ensure good coverage of AONB landscapes.

In order to generate random fixed point photography locations, which were not subject to officer or surveyor bias, the AONB was divided into 4km grid squares, using the centre point as the photograph location. This method generated a large number of sample locations which was felt to be unfeasible for surveying with existing staff resources. To create fewer fixed point locations, the AONB was then split into 6km squares, using the centre point as the fixed point location. This method generated 41 locations, with a least one point covering each LMZ. For ease of access the fixed photograph location was placed at the nearest publicly accessible place to the centre point. In order to be able to view the landscape at different times of year each location will be photographed annually, in the autumn one year and late spring / summer the next. Photos are taken in 4 directions, North, South, East and West. The first 20 sites were photographed in October 2018 and the next 21 will be photographed in May 2019. As a catalogue of photos is built up over time, this will provide a valuable insight into the changing landscape.

Herefordshire Meadows Facilitation Group

The Herefordshire Meadows Group has expanded to over 50 core members, with many in the Wye Valley AONB. As a Natural England funded Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Group, the Herefordshire Meadows Group is now half way through 5 years of funded support. The purpose of Facilitation Funding is to help groups of farmers, foresters and land managers improve the natural environment. These groups are normally focused on a tight geographical area and made up of neighbouring farmers, but the Herefordshire Meadows Group is different in that it is a network of farmers with a common interest across a much larger landscape area. The group organise and host a variety of well attended farm events throughout the year to share best practice and experience of meadow management and creation. A number of events have taken place in the Wye Valley AONB. The group are currently considering work for pilot meadow creation work in 2019.

Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Green Infrastructure (GI) Project

The Project Officer has been making good progress since commencing in post last October and the project is on target with outputs.

Investigate solutions to long standing access issues:

- Chapel Hill Road & Limekiln Brook

Issues include erosion from flash flooding and water runoff from catchment, stream and springs combining with unclassified highway at various points, exacerbated by vehicle access. High rainfall events can block trash screen & culverts within 10 minutes at Tintern and further increase damage to the unclassified highway. Atkins consultancy have just been appointed to identify NFM opportunities in the Limekiln Brook catchment and to look at water sources, pathways and impacts. Once the impacts on the unclassified highway have been identified, works to improve the highway condition can be considered.

- Whitebrook Byway

An analysis of options for Whitebrook Byway has determined that remedies are too costly for this project. Solutions may also require proactive woodland management in NRW woodland and do not directly relate to water management issues.

- Options for additional highway run-off issues may be investigated in the project area, with some consultant input.

Farm management advice

The Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF) have been commissioned to undertake Farm Advice visits. They have visited four farms with visit reports being finalised through the project. Additionally a further six farms will be visited through an SDF grant. Priorities for project capital spend are being assessed based on the Farm advice reports.

Invasive weed mapping and control

With the acknowledged time constraints of the project, the focus is on

- Himalayan balsam control in a small sub catchment with volunteers.
- Japanese Knotweed control of known stands carried out by contractors, while establishing records of other stands in project area with partner/volunteer support.

Pilot NFM work

Opportunities for pilot work is being established: following WUF farm visits, from research following access issues, working with project partners and through other contact with private landowners. Contact has been made with a number of other NFM projects, collaborating to share ideas and best practice. These include the Stroud Rural Sustainable Drainage Project, Pickering Slow the Flow project, Hereford NFM Project and the Forest of Dean Beaver release project. Partnership engagement has included guided walks, talks and information sharing events. The Project Officer is negotiating with partners over anticipated consents for NFM interventions, which will come down to local decision making due to the lack of any national framework.

Ross riverside

Partnership working with Ross Town Council is continuing at the riverside in Ross-on-Wye. The willow river bank revetment has been well used by anglers throughout 2018, and they have been pleased with the improved accessibility it has provided to the river. There are discussions ongoing about how similar work can be taken forward during the coming year.

The Town Council have continued to proactively manage two areas of amenity grassland managed as traditional meadow habitat, cutting infrequently and removing arisings to reduce nutrient levels. A visit was arranged with the Floodplain Meadow Partnership to seek expert advice on management, and following surveying and soil sampling, a brief report has been produced with recommendations for management. Nitrogen levels are now reducing in the grassland sufficiently for work to enhance the floral diversity of the area to be taken forward.

West Midlands Deer Priority Area

Since autumn 2016 the Deer Initiative have been contracted by Natural England and the Forestry Commission to focus on three Deer Priority Areas in the West Midlands: Dinmore Hill, the Woolhope Dome and the Lower Wye Valley. In terms of deer species for deer

management the focus is on the sustainable management of fallow and muntjac. The objectives of the project are:

- to return woodland SSSIs into favourable condition
- to support commercial woodland management
- to support conservation woodland activities
- to reduce agricultural damage caused by deer
- to reduce road traffic accidents caused by deer
- and, to reduce the risk of disease transfer to domestic livestock.

The activities delivered between April 2018 and March 2019 include:

- Landowner awareness raising events (10 completed)
- Landowner advice on deer management operations - including the provision of deer management plans (31 completed)
- Deer Activity and Impact surveys (32 planned Feb, March, April)
- Deer stalker training and Best Practice events (1 on 15/03/19 and 2 planned tbc)
- Organisation of collaborative cull days in each of the Action Areas during the winter (female) season

Dinmore: Nov 6th, Dec 4th, Jan 8th, Feb 5th, March 5th

Woolhope: Nov 7th, Dec 5th, Jan 9th, Feb 7th, March 7th

Lower Wye: Nov 13th, 15th, 23rd, Dec 13th, 14th, 21st, Jan 15th, 17th, 25th, Feb 12th, 14th, 22nd, March 12th, 14th, 22nd.

These collaborative days

- offer a landscape scale approach (necessary due to the herding and movement of fallow deer)
- focus on discrete geographical areas (any deer movement on the day yields additional chances to cull)
- assist with positioning and preparation of high seats
- provide a chiller trailer to ensure high quality venison enters the food chain.