

REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES

Purpose

To advise members of progress with the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, with additional Welsh Government funding and the establishment of the National Designated Landscapes Partnership.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- In December the inaugural Wales National Designated Landscapes Partnership meeting was held with officers from Welsh AONBs and National Parks, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the National Association for AONBs.
- Welsh Government have confirmed a second year of Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) capital funding with some slightly revised criteria for projects.
- Welsh Government have allocated revenue funding for 2021/22 that enables the retention of one AONB post and the creation of one new post.

Reasons

Welsh Government have been working with AONB lead officers, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the NAAONB on addressing the inequality of status, profile and resourcing between National Parks and AONBs, as highlighted in 'Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks'. The National Designated Landscapes Partnership has now been established with a secretariat. Welsh Government have provided a second year of capital funding through the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) scheme and allocated additional revenue funding to support initiatives within AONBs and National Parks.

Implications

National Designated Landscapes Partnership (NDLP) met for the first time in December and has met again following appointment of a Co-ordinator and an admin support officer. The elected chairperson of the NDLP is Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader, and vice-chair is Emyr Williams, Snowdonia National Park CEO.

Welsh Government have revised the criteria for the second year of Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) capital funding scheme. There are four main strands:

- Decarbonisation – through decarbonisation of Authority activity and assets, schemes to enable decarbonisation in communities including appropriate renewable energy, and carbon sequestration schemes in the landscape

- Nature-based solutions and nature recovery, including projects that improve connectivity and resilience of ecosystems in designated areas being mindful of climate change adaptation
- Supporting more sustainable tourism, including improving visitor facilities and infrastructure, helping landscapes recover from the impact of tourism, prepare for changing tourism patterns following Covid, and improve and protect valued cultural and heritage assets.
- Supporting more resilient and healthy local economies and communities, such as investment in public access to recreation and local green infrastructure, and, supporting the foundational economy in a way that promotes a Green Recovery.

There is up to £225k per AONB in addition there is resource for a small number of high impact, collaborative projects across multiple AONBs and National Parks. The AONB Unit is working with Monmouthshire County Council colleagues on a number of proposals, along with collaborations with the other Designated Landscapes.

The delivery of the first year of SLSP projects is underway including improving the energy efficiency and decarbonisation of the AONB Office. This includes replacing the Port-a-cabin meeting room with a more efficient building and the recent purchase of an electric van to replace a diesel van.

Welsh Government revenue funding for 2021/22 enables the retention of the Lower Wye Project Officer and the recruitment of one new post, a Lower Wye Nature Recovery Project officer. This is part of efforts to address the inequality of status, profile and resourcing between National Parks and AONBs. However, the funding is only for one year so longer term strategic planning remains curtailed.

Background

Welsh Government's statement on Priorities for AONBs & National Parks 'Valued & Resilient' (published in July 2018) is available here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/areas-outstanding-natural-beauty-national-parks-2018-report%20.pdf>