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Notice of Reports Received following Publication of Agenda.

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm,
The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford

Attached is an appendix to a report that the committee will consider as part of the original agenda but had been omitted.

Item No	Item	Pages
7. e	Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, Future Landscapes Wales.	1 - 8

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

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Appendix 3

WYE VALLEY AONB OFFICER'S REPORT

Implications and Response to Future Landscapes Wales Briefing Papers

The proposals from the Future Landscapes Wales Briefing Papers (Appendix 2) with the most significant implications for the Wye Valley AONBs are addressed below.

Vision

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (pages 2 & 3)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
<p>The proposed Vision for Designated Landscapes in Wales is:-</p> <p>“Wales as a nation values its landscapes for what they provide for the people of Wales and elsewhere. The designated landscapes of Wales deliver both within and beyond their boundaries to safeguard their natural and cultural resources and deliver the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.”</p> <p>In the Working Group an amendment was suggested, to read: <i>“Wales as a nation values its landscapes for what they provide for the people of Wales and elsewhere. The designated landscapes of Wales deliver both within and beyond their boundaries to enhance their social, economic, environmental and cultural resources and deliver the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.”</i></p>	<p>➤ The proposed Vision has a sound progression from Safeguarding natural and cultural resources -> maximising well-being -> enhancing special qualities. However there is some concern that the term ‘natural beauty’ is not referred to as this remains in the founding legislation.</p> <p>In the Working Group there was some discussion as to whether the Vision should be shorter and more about 'nature' and less on 'people', although others felt 'natural resources' adequately covered these. The amendment replaced 'natural' with 'social, economic and environmental'. This seems to be more 'people' and less 'nature' focused. The amendment also lost the progression in the original Vision from Safeguarding -> maximising well-being -> enhancing special qualities. Instead of 'safeguarding' the amended Vision is more about 'enhancing' social, economic, environmental and cultural resources. The amendment also added 3 words, rather than making it shorter, and has completely removed the word 'natural' and there is still no inclusion of 'beauty'. Consequently there is still room for some rationalisation and prioritisation of the purpose of the Vision.</p>
<p>There are 9 Principles for Managing Designated Landscapes (page 2 & 3 of the Briefing Paper, Appendix 2).</p>	<p>➤ These reinforce the attitudes, behaviours and approach to working that dedicated bodies, such as the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, the Joint Advisory</p>

	Committee and the AONB Unit, already exhibit.
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Governance

The general consensus is that the current system of governance of AONBs and National Parks needs some modifications but not radical reform.

- This should be endorsed, particularly for the Wye Valley AONB, recognising the uniqueness and strengths of the cross-border arrangements in place.

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (pages 4 - 7)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
Five Principles of Good Governance for Welsh Designated Landscapes are proposed based on (Page 4 of the Briefing Papers):- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimacy, Participation and Voice; • Developing and implementing a Strategic Vision; • Effective performance management; • Accountability and transparency; • Fairness and rights. 	➤ The Wye Valley AONB Partnership, the Joint Advisory Committee and the AONB Unit already endeavour to achieve these Principles in their activity and operations.
Strengths and Weaknesses both designations are made (Page 5 of the Briefing Papers) as well as for alternative governance models.	➤ The Strengths of AONBs appear a fair assessment.
Weaknesses	
• Decision may be restricted to Local Authority Members (often Cabinet members), with other expert and representative groups restricted to an advisory role;	➤ JAC members with voting rights extend beyond the local authority members. However, it is accepted that the JAC operates in an advisory capacity to the local authorities (and other partners). But the JAC determines much of the activity of the AONB Partnership, above and beyond the operation of the local authorities.
• There is no current provision for representative by the national interest;	➤ This is constitutionally correct, although several members do bring 'national interest' expertise to the JAC.
• Governance and funding is dependent on decisions of the Local Authority or Local Authorities;	➤ This is largely the case as the JAC is legally constituted by the local authorities and they also employ the AONB Unit staff and host the AONB Unit budgets.
• S.85 requirement is weak and many stakeholders ignore their responsibilities;	➤ True, although there are increasing examples of compliance or recognition, including from Ofgem, Highways Agency and Welsh Water.
• There is a lack of transparency on costs, performance and fairness as relevant documentation relates to Local Authorities,	➤ AONB budgets are monitored by the AONB Steering Group and simplified accounts presented to JAC. All conditions of grants, including Defra &

Proposal in Briefing Papers (pages 4 - 7)	➤ Response
with no requirement of a public audit of the AONB.	Welsh Government/NRW core funding, are adhered to and bids and claims made accordingly. Project and core budgets have been randomly audited. With a gross annual budgets and turnover of under £500,000 it is needs to be determined whether full annual audits would be the best use of public funds.
Issues to consider	
AONB Membership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for expert members to make decisions as well as advise; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ JAC Co-opted members with voting rights already include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Land & Business Association • National Farmers Union • 3 representatives of county voluntary conservation sectors • 3 representatives of County Associations for Parish/Town/Community Councils,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of individuals to represent the national interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This could be accommodated by modifying the 3 representatives of county voluntary conservation sectors to have a broader national remit / expertise
Joint Working	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a plan of how to share resources, including staff. • consider options for developing regional models of shared governance. • consider ways of working together along the model of National Parks Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Already share some staffing/consultancy resources with Malvern Hills AONB ➤ The Wye Valley AONB's unique cross-border position would need to be fully recognised in any Joint Working collaborations. ➤ Any Joint Working model should build on, rather than detract from, the effectiveness of the NAAONB.
Strengthening the Management Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing good practice on how to engage with a wide range of stakeholders when developing a Management Plan; • amend s62 / s85 legislation to strengthen the requirement of all stakeholders to take account of the Management Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agree
Accountability and Transparency	
Require AONBs to publish an Annual Report and Accounts highlighting performance and expenditure in relation to the AONB, set within a clear audit and reporting framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agree. These are largely already accomplished. Proportionality required. Caution needed on cost benefit of very limited AONB Unit staff resources being diverted to onerous reporting procedures.
Engagement	

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (pages 4 - 7)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
All Designated Landscapes to adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement and work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes.	➤ Although these are ‘in Wales’ principles they are reasonable. However, again Proportionality is required with regards to AONB Partnerships and available resources.
New Designation	
The Welsh Government and NRW should adopt the Principles of Good Governance - Welsh Designated Landscapes as part of the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of any new designated landscapes. These Principles could also be used to evaluate any proposed changes to their Governance that the Designated Landscapes may wish to propose.	➤ Agree.

Innovation in Resourcing

The emphasis is on securing resources for 3 areas:

- Sustainable Land Management, at a landscape scale, to ensure natural and cultural resources in distinctive landscapes are conserved and enhanced for future generations. This requires landscape scale collaboration which is best facilitated by a :-
 - Dedicated / Executive Body. The vast majority of models across the globe for delivery and resourcing of landscape scale collaboration in nationally important landscapes receive the majority of their core resourcing through public funding. Consequently this requires
 - Governance, that adopts the principles outlined above, accepting that differing models, arrangements and levels of executive power will affect the resourcing required.
- It is recognised that there is no single or simple solution to resourcing and there are a number of challenges to innovation (bulleted on pages 8 & 9 of the Briefing Papers).

➤ These are all endorsed.

There are a number of short, medium and long term actions that Future Landscapes Wales stakeholders will need to progress to secure innovations in resourcing.

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (page 10)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
Short term:	
➤ Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities [PL bodies & partners]	➤ Agree, this is on-going in the Wye Valley AONB Partnership
➤ Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]	➤ Agree, this is on-going in the Wye Valley AONB Partnership
➤ Establish more effective ways to share good (& bad) practice between protected landscape bodies and other stakeholders [PL bodies & partners]	➤ The National Association for AONBs already has established and effective pathways for collaboration between AONB Partnerships. Need to have better

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (page 10)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
	links with National Park Authorities and National Park stakeholders.
➤ Develop the arguments and strategy to challenge the short-term nature of grant funding [PL bodies & partners with WG and funding bodies]	➤ This is happening to some extent through the National Association for AONBs. Need better co-ordination with other interested parties, including NPAs.
➤ investigate charitable and legacy funding opportunities with the Community Foundation in Wales [CFW]	➤ Wye Valley AONB Partnership already pursuing this. Several other examples with other AONBs & NPs with various types of Funds in Wales & England.
➤ negotiate to ensure AONB Partnerships are adequately resourced to achieve their functions [WG & NRW]	➤ Agree. Concern that some AONBs receive insufficient resources to maintain an adequate core team.
Medium term:	
➤ Build a consensus to lobby on the direction and measures for RDP 2020+ [PL bodies & partners, especially CLA, FUW, NFU, NRW, WG]	➤ Agree. This is even more pertinent post Brexit.
➤ monitor the effectiveness of the National Parks Partnership [NPs]	➤ Agree. This is an interesting new model for attracting business sponsorship and investment.
➤ negotiate reduced burdensome bureaucracy for National Parks [NPAs, WG, Audit Office]	➤ Agree. Any bureaucracy needs to be proportionate.
➤ Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities [PL bodies & partners]	➤ As above, this is on-going in the Wye Valley AONB Partnership
➤ Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]	➤ As above, this is on-going in the Wye Valley AONB Partnership
Long term:	
• Secure appropriate measures in RDP 2020+ for sustainable land management in protected landscapes [WG]	➤ Agree. This is even more pertinent post Brexit.
• Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]	➤ As above, this is on-going in the Wye Valley AONB Partnership

Catalysts for sustainable economic development

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (annex)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
Introduction of Third Statutory Purpose	
To promote integrated resource management with economic and community development	➤ Wye Valley AONB Management Plan continues to recognise that supplementary

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (annex)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
which supports the over-all cultural heritage of the area. (Marsden)	<p>purposes to the AONB designation were developed by government agencies in the 1990s (the Countryside Commission and Countryside Council for Wales ‘AONBs: A Policy Statement CCP 356, 1991’ and reiterated by the Countryside Agency in ‘CA 24, November 2001’). These further AONB purposes are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In pursuing the primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and of the economic and social needs of the local communities. ▪ Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.
Governance	
Ensure that a review of governance structures for Designated Landscapes facilitates the engagement of business interests and expertise.	➤ Noted, but the Wye Valley AONB JAC already has CLA, NFU & Tourism representatives.
Measuring Success	
Develop a series of indicators drawing on the National SD indicators in order to measure success in relation to achieving Goals: – What will a Prosperous Wales look like? – What will a Resilient Wales look like?	➤ Wherever possible data should be gathered at an all-Wales level and disaggregated for the Designated Landscape. Adequate resources need to be made available to monitor and collate data for indicators. These need to be proportionate to the effort involved in data gathering and value of the outcomes of the indicator.
Place Planning	
Produce a robust Toolkit in order to facilitate a consistent approach to the production of Place Plans whilst recognising they will need to be different according to local needs and involve future generations of the community.	➤ Agree this would be useful.
Produce a series of Case Studies of successful Place Plans to highlight success factors and learning points.	➤ Agree this would be useful.
Develop an Action Plan that will support the production of Place Plans beyond Designated Landscapes.	➤ Agree; impacts in the setting of the AONB are becoming an important consideration. Also Designated Landscapes should champion initiatives that can be rolled out across the wider countryside.

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (annex)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
Look at the opportunities to link Place Plans to Tourism Growth particularly in respect of alternative markets such as Dark Skies and Geo Parks.	➤ Agree. Tourism is an established and important industry in and around the Wye Valley AONB.
Green Growth	
Investigate work already taking place and how Designated Landscapes can contribute positively such as Green Apprenticeships.	➤ Agree.
Investigate opportunities to strengthen the DL brand both locally and nationally within the tourism sector.	➤ Agree. The 'Wye Valley' is already a strong brand and the AONB Partnership is a strategic member of the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Destination Partnership. Progress is being made on raising the profile of AONBs through collaborative initiatives and through the National Association for AONBs with both Visit Wales and Visit England.
Review funding priorities of SDF schemes in order to ensure they are being effective in supporting local economic initiatives based on local priorities and need. Link to Place Planning.	➤ Agree, although this is already the case, through the independent SDF Assessment Panel. It is at times more of a challenge to get the appropriate applications to enable the SDF to support local economic initiatives.
Identify opportunities for increased resources into SDF as a key pump primer for further investment – look at local Visitor Payback models, use of plastic bag tax proceeds, etc.	➤ Agree. As above 'Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities'. However this may be a challenge to implement in the Wye Valley AONB due to the cross-border complexities.
Drawing on best practice and ecosystems services principles, implement a place specific pilot agri-environment scheme responding to local needs as a potential replacement for generic pan Wales schemes.	➤ Agree. As above 'Secure appropriate measures in RDP 2020+ for sustainable land management in protected landscapes'
Establish a network of DL officers to share best practice to develop local food supply chain initiatives and community based renewable energy schemes	➤ Agree. As above 'Establish more effective ways to share good (& bad) practice between protected landscape bodies and other stakeholders'
Meet with the Green Growth energy team to address perceptions of barriers to renewable energy development in National Parks.	➤ This should be extended to AONBs too.
Engage in dialogue about the urgent needs for broadband connectivity whenever possible.	➤ Agree.
Payments for Ecosystem Services	
Establish public / private sector partnerships in order to establish a mechanism to effectively promote the product to the commercial market.	➤ Agree.

<i>Proposal in Briefing Papers (annex)</i>	<i>➤ Response</i>
Develop and recruit the marketing and sales skills necessary to develop the market to serious funders.	➤ Agree.
Engage with the Future Generations Commissioner to discuss the value of DLs as laboratories for practical sustainability.	➤ Agree.