

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th March 2018

BEAVERS IN THE WYE CATCHMENT

Purpose

To inform members of the latest situation with regards to the reintroduction of Beavers in the Wye Catchment.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- This Spring, Forestry Commission England will be releasing a family of beavers into a secure enclosure in the Forest of Dean just outside the AONB boundary near Lydbrook.
- Andrew Nixon, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, will give a brief verbal update on the Positions Statements from the local and national Wildlife Trusts on the general approach to Beaver releases (see attached documents).
- There are anecdotal stories of beavers already having been present in the Wye Catchment.

Reasons

In December 2017 the Environment Secretary and the Forestry Commission confirmed plans, approved by Natural England, to release two adult beavers and two kits into a secure enclosure at Lydbrook, Gloucestershire. It is anticipated that the four animals will help prevent flooding in the area by improving biodiversity and building dams and ponds.

The Wildlife Trusts Wales, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Shropshire Wildlife Trust have produced a Draft Position Statement on Beavers in The River Wye Catchment (attached below). The draft Statement notes “there have been the occasional report of beavers on the River Wye, but until recently there has not been any conclusive evidence.”

The Wildlife Trusts, the national umbrella organisations for the local Wildlife Trusts produced a Position Statement on Beavers in 2016 (also attached below).

Implications

The Forest of Dean Beavers are due to be released this Spring into a 6.5 hectare (16-acre) enclosure with the Greathough Brook running through it, just outside the AONB boundary near Lydbrook. The fence will run alongside a well used forestry track which will provide local people and visitors the ability to view the Beavers (noting that they will be naturally elusive). The Beavers are expected to create dams, which in turn will create pools of open water and wetland delivering a range of benefits for local wildlife, as well as a more visually interesting valley walk. Work is being completed to fence the enclosure and secure grills to the culverts on the Greathough Brook to prevent beaver escapes.

Background

See the attached Position Statements.