

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

AONB GOOD GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Purpose

To receive the outcomes of the recent Task Group with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership on the review of the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes'.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the outcomes of the Task Group meeting of 24th April 2018 and

- A. welcomes the identification of 'what we do well'
- B. Accepts the 20 recommendations that build on 'what we could do better'.

Key Issues

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

Reasons

The JAC agreed to pursue a joint initiative with the Gower AONB Partnership to undertake a review of current AONB governance against the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* and make recommendations for change to their respective AONB Partnerships. The 'Principles of Good Governance' are based on those of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - Governance of Protected Areas (2013).

Implications

Two tables are appended. The first is the outcomes of the Task Group discussions, listing "What we do well" and "What we could do better" against the 'Principles of Good

Governance for Designated Landscapes’. The second table (with a thick border) identifies the 20 Recommendations which address “What we could do better”. These are also outlined below.

Recommendations

1. Prepare brief ‘JAC contact report’ for nominees to feedback to their respective nominating bodies annually (or after each JAC?)
- 2a. Increase level of information for, & communication with, general public about AONB, JAC, Management Plan, AONB Unit & actions.
- 2b. Highlight need to enhance national profile of AONBs through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.
3. Ensure AONB Partnership retains relevant, broad & active participation (through ‘relevant, broad & active’ meetings, actions & outcomes) and appropriate projects
4. Communicate & disseminate JAC procedures, opportunities & outcomes, including:-
 - Public Questions
 - JAC agenda setting
 - JAC papers
5. Make web links to JAC minutes more accessible
6. Review guidance and criteria for all JAC co-opted nominees to emphasise ‘national’ connections
7. review criteria for 3 co-opted ‘County Voluntary Conservation Sector representatives’ to align more to a national context
8. Promote actions of AONB Unit & partners more regularly – through website, social media & press (local & commercial).
9. Establish more training events, seminars etc. for LAs/Town/Parish/Community councils & Gov/agencies
10. Highlight need for more training through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.
11. Review Vision as part of AONB Management Plan review
12. Address connection between ‘national’ & ‘local’ agendas & outcomes through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales and AONB Management Plan review
13. Report to JAC on achievements of Section 85 Bodies
14. Progress ‘land management’ engagement through projects, AONB Farming Awards, Wye Catchment Partnership, NAAONB and development of post-Brexit agri-environment schemes with Welsh Government & Defra

15. Strengthen collaboration with local Ambassador schemes and diversify effectiveness of AONB Volunteers
16. Publish annual JAC attendance figures and enforce JAC Agreement Clause 9(5) – “review appointment if 3 or more consecutive meetings missed”.
17. Grant & bid risk assessments &/or SWOT analyses prepared by AONB Unit and shared with project partners, TOWP & JAC as appropriate
18. Consolidate policy to use local produce wherever possible.
19. Work with Local authorities and other partners to deliver Equalities Plans/policies
20. Develop engagement projects with ‘hard to reach’ sectors and communicate opportunities & outcomes

Overall this review identifies a number of small and/or administrative changes to the governance procedures of the Wye Valley AONB but does not recommend any significant or radical changes to the governance arrangements. It is considered that several of these Recommendations can be adopted and implemented swiftly without any major increases in workload or changes in direction of practices. However, there are a number of the Recommendations that relate to issues of communication, public relations and promotion of AONB and JAC activity. The JAC has previously noted that under current budget forecasts it is proposed that the AONB Information Officer post ends at the end of this financial year, reducing the AONB Unit by one member of staff, down to a 4 person team. While this is intended to save money it will significantly reduce the capacity of the AONB Unit to deliver these Recommendations on behalf of the AONB Partnership. This will need further attention at the next JAC in November.

Background

The Task and Finish group was established with 3 members each from Gower & Wye Valley AONB Partnerships, supported and facilitated by both AONB lead officers. The Wye Valley AONB Partnership members were:

Chris Barron	JAC / Wye Valley Society
David Broadbent	JAC / Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism
Cllr David Dovey	JAC / Monmouthshire County Council
Andrew Blake	AONB Manager

The Task Group met at the Wye Valley AONB office, Hadnock Road, Monmouth on Tuesday 24th April 2018. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB lead officer also attended and advised, providing some peer-review scrutiny.

The group received presentations on the different governance arrangements and structures for the three AONBs. They then discussed the ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report (page 11. Table 1.) and considered how they may be applied to the existing governance arrangements for Gower AONB Partnership and Wye Valley AONB Partnership.