

## REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

### ***Purpose***

To advise members of the progress following the respective Reviews of Designated Landscapes in Wales and England.

FOR INFORMATION

### ***Key Issues***

- The Welsh AONB lead officers continue to meet with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, the National Association for AONBs and the Welsh National Parks to progress the 'Valued and Resilient' statement.
- Welsh Government officials are currently finalising proposals for capital funding schemes for the Designated Landscapes, including a Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places scheme and augmented funding for the Sustainable Development Fund.
- The 'Landscapes Review' of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England, chaired by Julian Glover, was published in September 2019 with 27 'Proposals' for Government.
- The Conservative manifesto stated "We welcome the Glover Review" and it is anticipated that a formal response to it will be made by the Government later in the year.

### ***Reasons***

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales 'Marsden Review' *National Landscapes: Realising their Potential* (published in October 2015) highlighted among other things the inequalities between AONBs and National Parks. These disparities were reiterated in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* (published in March 2017) led by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM. The subsequent *Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for AONBs & National Parks* (published in July 2018) identified that although parity broadly exists between National Parks and AONBs in terms of planning policy, there is an inequality of status, profile and resourcing. Welsh Government and AONB lead officers have been working towards addressing the levels of current resourcing.

The Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England was launched in May 2018 by the then Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP. The 'Landscapes Review' was led by the writer and journalist Julian Glover and the final report was published on 21st September 2019 with 27 'Proposals' for Government.

### ***Implications***

Welsh Government officials have been working on proposals for capital funding schemes for the Designated Landscapes, including a one-year Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) scheme. It is understood that the focus of the funding programme will be to contribute to key Welsh Government objectives around decarbonisation, more resilient rural economies and more sustainable tourism. Additional strands will target biodiversity and broadening access to walking, cycling and green spaces with multiple benefits for tourism, health and

wellbeing. Augmented funding for the Sustainable Development Fund is also proposed. This is all subject to Welsh Government budget approval.

The Welsh National Park and AONB lead officers are meeting with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, and the National Association for AONBs to progress anticipated delivery of the SLSP programme. The capital funding is welcomed. However, there are concerns about the capacity of some of the Designated Landscapes teams to deliver a one-year capital funding programme at such relative short notice.

The Glover Review in England has been broadly welcomed since its publication. The 27 'Proposals' in the Review are generally recognised as being good for nature, good for people and good for our most precious landscapes. The Conservative manifesto stated "We welcome the Glover Review and will create new National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as making our most loved landscapes greener, happier, healthier and open to all." After the General Election on 12<sup>th</sup> December, it is understood that DEFRA officials are working on the implementation of the Review, among other things.

Aspects of the Glover Review were discussed at the NAAONB Chairpersons' Conference in November and also at the AONB Lead Officers' meeting in February. Similar to the Welsh Government's response to the Review in Wales, Proposals will need to be split into short-term 'quick win' actionable items, medium-term items that require policy amendments and longer-term items that require legislative change. It is anticipated that a formal response to the Glover Review it will be made by the Government later in the year.

### ***Background***

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>

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>