

GLOVER REVIEW AND FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Purpose

To advise members of the Ministerial Statement on the Government's response to the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes in England and the launch of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

Recommendations

That the JAC:

- A. Welcomes the Ministerial Statement of 24th June outlining the forthcoming response to the Glover Review and the launching of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
- B. Notes the accompanying announcement by Natural England and the respective responses by the National Association for AONBs to the Ministerial Statement and Natural England announcement.
- C. Endorses the establishment of a Local Assessment Panel for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, with at least one JAC member, and the recruitment of a Farm Advisor to assist applicants in the Wye Valley AONB.

Key Issues

- The 'Glover' Landscapes Review of National Parks and AONBs in England was published in 2019 with 27 'Proposals' for Government.
- The Written Ministerial Statement published on 24th June provides the Government's initial response to the Landscapes Review (see appendix 1 below &/or <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-06-24/hcws119>)
- The Minister also launched the DEFRA funded 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme, originally announced in the Agricultural Transition Plan.
- Natural England have also announced proposals for new protected areas across England (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natural-england-announces-landmark-new-programme-for-protected-landscapes>)
- The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) continues to working close with DEFRA and Natural England and has responded formally to both (see Appendix 2 & 3 below).
- Each AONB and National Park in England has an allocation from DEFRA to administer the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme for farmers and land managers to provide benefits for nature, climate, people and places (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes>).

- The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme requires and enables the AONB Unit to establish a Local Assessment Panel and recruit a Farm Advisor to assist farmers and land managers applying to the programme.
- It is proposed that the Local Assessment Panel is adopted as a JAC sub-committee with at least one JAC member, augmented by other sector representatives as outlined by DEFRA 'Expectation' (see Appendix 4 below).

Reasons

The Glover Review in England was broadly welcomed when published in September 2019. The Government has now made an initial response, including launching the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. This was originally outlined in the 'Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024' published in November 2020 (see pages 44-5 in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-transition-plan-2021-to-2024>). Natural England have also announced plans that will take forward some of the Glover Review Proposals.

Implications

The Ministerial Statement outlining the Government's initial response to the Landscapes Review mentions a number of aspects that are likely to require significant consideration. Over the coming months the Government will work closely with partners, including local authorities and National Park Authorities, to address the Review's recommendations in full and consult on draft proposals later this year.

The Written Ministerial Statement is in Appendix 1 below (and is available on-line here <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-06-24/hcws119>). Key items mentioned and suggested for further consultation are summarised as follow:

- that more funding be directed towards making space for nature and supporting nature recovery in our Protected Landscapes
- the role of the future Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes in supporting nature recovery in Protected Landscapes
- Natural England to prepare proposals for the possible designation of additional National Nature Reserves
- Increased support for public access to Protected Landscapes.
- Natural England to consider the designation of:-
 - a new Yorkshire Wolds AONB
 - a new Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB
 - an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB
 - an extension to the Chilterns AONB
- To map and take forward recommendations to designate more areas of the country for their natural beauty.
- Consideration of how structures might be changed to bring the family of Protected Landscape closer together
- Ensure there is more strategic direction for Protected Landscape nationally, while retaining their local functions.

- To explore opportunities to diversify funding sources including natural capital investments and other commercial opportunities.
- To consider options to strengthen the status and support given to AONBs
- To possibly change the name of AONBs.

The NAAONB and National Parks England will be working together, along with other environmental NGOs and stakeholders to address these considerations.

The detail of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is now published by DEFRA here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes> . The local 'Guidance for Applicants in Wye Valley AONB' is available on the AONB website: <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes/> . The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme allows farmers and other land managers to liaise with the AONB Unit and apply for funding to improve public access, and deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment, for people and for places. Applications will need to demonstrate that proposed projects a) deliver against at least one, of the following items under the four key themes and b) help deliver the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

Climate

- More carbon is stored and/or sequestered
- Flood risk has been reduced
- Better understanding among farmers, land managers and the public as to what different habitats and land uses can deliver for carbon storage and reduced carbon emissions
- The landscape is more resilient to climate change

Nature

- There is a greater area of wildlife rich habitat
- There is greater connectivity between habitats
- Existing habitat is better managed for biodiversity
- There is an increase in biodiversity

People

- There are more opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- There are more opportunities for more diverse audiences to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- There is greater public engagement in land management, for example through volunteering

Place

- The quality and character of the landscape is reinforced or enhanced
- Historic structures and features are conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- There is an increase in the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, which in turn contributes to a more thriving local economy

Up to £170,000 is available in this financial year for grants and, it is understood, a slightly reduced amount for the following two years. Resources allow for the administration of the

scheme and the recruitment of a Farm Advisor to support the AONB Unit with delivery of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. They will lead on engagement with farmers and land managers on the ground and support applicants to establish high quality applications.

A Local Assessment Panel will be established, which will determine application over £5,000 up to a maximum of £85,000. Applications under £5,000 are delegated to the AONB Manager for decision. The DEFRA guidance on 'Expectations for Local Assessment Panels' is attached (Appendix 4). The Agreement constituting the JAC states in paragraph 10. "The Committee may appoint sub-committees which shall be constituted in such manner and to which may be delegated such functions of the Committee under this Agreement as may be agreed by the Committee". It is proposed that the Local Assessment Panel is adopted as a JAC sub-committee with at least one JAC member. The statutory and other sector representatives will be selected as required.

For information

Lord Benyon has been appointed as a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DEFRA, replacing Lord Gardiner, who has become Senior Deputy Speaker in the House of Lords. Previously as MP for Newbury, including parts of the North Wessex Downs AONB, Richard Benyon was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs from May 2010 to October 2013.

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>

Appendix 1.

Government response to the Landscapes Review

Statement by Environment Secretary George Eustice

made on 24 June 2021 (Statement UIN HCWS119)

In May 2018, Defra commissioned Julian Glover and an independent panel to consider how we might improve the management of our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Their report, the Landscapes Review, was published in September 2019. It set out a series of recommendations, including that more should be done to support nature's recovery in these landscapes; that the status of AONBs should be strengthened; that there was a need to bring the family of protected landscapes closer together with more strategic oversight and greater opportunities for career progression; and that more funding should support public access to protected landscapes.

The government agrees that more funding should be directed towards making space for nature and supporting nature's recovery in our protected landscapes. Since the review was published, we have been supporting important projects in our protected landscapes through our Nature for Climate Fund and Green Recovery Challenge Fund. Our future Local Nature Recovery scheme, part of the future agriculture policy, will also support the objective of nature's recovery in our protected landscapes and beyond. I have also asked Natural England to prepare proposals for the possible designation of additional National Nature Reserves, where there is landowner support, and to consider how nature's recovery within such designations might be supported financially through our new Landscape Recovery scheme (also part of our future agriculture policy).

The government also agrees that we should do more to support public access to protected landscapes. Today, I am announcing the new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, which will provide additional investment to allow farmers and other land managers to work in partnership with our National Park Authorities and AONB teams to improve public access, and deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment, for people and for places.

Natural England also will be taking forward the government's commitment to designate additional protected landscapes and is currently considering the designation of four new areas.

- Yorkshire Wolds AONB
- Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB
- An extension to the Surrey Hills AONB

- An extension to the Chilterns AONB

This work will contribute to the government's commitment of protecting 30% of our land by 2030, and boosting biodiversity, while taking forward the review's recommendation to designate more areas of the country for their natural beauty.

Each of our protected landscapes has its own identity, and many of their functions require local accountability. However, we are also considering how their structures might be changed so that we can bring the family of protected landscapes closer together, and ensure there is more strategic direction nationally, while retaining their local functions. We will also be exploring opportunities to increase private investment, particularly by diversifying funding sources to include emerging markets in natural capital and other commercial opportunities. We are also considering options to strengthen the status and support given to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the recommendation to possibly change their name. The Government will be working closely with our partners over the coming months including local authorities and National Park Authorities, to address the review's recommendations in full and consult on draft proposals later this year.