

FUTURE LANDSCAPES: DELIVERING FOR WALES

Purpose

To seek members' endorsement of the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales report and commitment to addressing the 'first steps to realising the Proposition'.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the motion supported by the National Assembly for Wales on the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales*
- B. Endorses the relevant actions in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* and addresses the 'first steps to realising the Proposition' under 'Delivering for Wales' and 'Fit for Purpose' including adopting the Vision, the 'Principles of good Governance for Designated Landscapes' and the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales'.

Key Issues

- The Review of Designated Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) in Wales continues to build momentum.
- On 9th May Lesley Griffiths, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and Lord Elis-Thomas published *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, The Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales* (appended).
- On 6th June the National Assembly for Wales voted unanimously in support of the vital role that AONBs & National Parks provide to Wales and endorsed the publication of the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report.
- The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas, will meet again on 20th July to take forward the priorities identified in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*.
- On 20th June Welsh Government launched a consultation document *Taking Forward Wales' Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*, which includes a chapter on Designated Landscapes. The consultation closes on 13th September 2017.
- Actions that the JAC and AONB Unit can take to help implement *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*, are tabulated below and include adopting 'Our Vision', the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' and the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales' (appended below).
- Further assessment of what local actions are needed to realise the Proposition in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* will be reported back to the JAC.

Reasons

The Independent Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, commissioned by the Welsh Government and chaired by Professor Terry Marsden, reported in autumn 2015. The 'Marsden Report' made 69 recommendations covering proposals and observations on purposes, principles, vision, governance models, planning and funding.

Following this report, the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, was established. The purpose was to explore the Marsden recommendations and report their findings and the case for change. The Working Group involved representatives of the National Parks, AONBs, business, conservation and other interest groups.

On 9th May 2017 the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report (attached) was published jointly by Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and Lord Elis-Thomas AM. The Proposition (page 5), Vision (page 7) and proposals (pages 20-23) set the designated landscapes on a path to drive the sustainable management of natural resources in their areas and to work beyond their current boundaries. It draws on the strengths and opportunities of genuine partnership and collaboration. In doing so, it advocates greater flexibility in structures in order to meet the needs of places and communities. The Vision "***Our Vision***" is

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; delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.

The Welsh Assembly on 6th June held a Plenary Debate on 'The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales' attended by 50 Assembly Members. The resulting amended motion was passed unanimously.

The National Assembly for Wales:

- 1. Notes the publication of the report *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales****
- 2. Agrees Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks play a vital role:***
 - a) as valued places for nature and providing public and private benefit through a wide range of services; and***
 - b) in the sustainable management of natural resources and supporting vibrant rural communities.***
- 3. Agrees that all landscapes have a special value, as expressed in the sense of 'bro', which is at the heart of community identity and the way many people in Wales express their distinct sense of belonging to a particular place.***
- 4. Believes that any change in the legislation governing National Parks should be taken through the Assembly as primary legislation.***

The Welsh Government has launched a consultation document *Taking Forward Wales' Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*. The document includes chapters on Forestry (2), Designated Landscapes (3), Access to Outdoors (4), Water (6), Agriculture (9) and Wildlife (10). The consultation closes on 13th September 2017 and provides an early opportunity to gauge views on The Proposition set out in the Future Landscapes report and to consider input which may inform the next stages, particularly on the aspects relating to any legislative changes.

Implications

The AONB Manager will continue positive collaborative engagement in the Future Landscapes programme and will work with the National Association for AONBs on a shared response to the *Sustainable Management of Natural Resources* Consultation. The Welsh Government are consulting on a number of proposals, which seek to further deliver the commitment to manage Wales’ natural resources more sustainably to deliver lasting economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits, as well as to ensure the continued prosperity of Wales. The consultation seeks views on proposals on whether potential regulatory reform is required to:

- improve alignment of forestry and designated landscapes with the sustainable management of natural resources
- improve access to outdoors
- improve governance structures
- streamline legislation
- improve the legislative framework through introduction of modern regulatory mechanisms.

A preliminary assessment of the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, The Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales* has identified a number of actions in the ‘first steps to realising the Proposition’ (pages 20-23) that have implications for the Wye Valley AONB and AONB Partnership. These are tabulated below.

<i>“first steps to realising the Proposition”</i>	Wye Valley AONB Partnership action
<i>Delivering for Wales - Collaboration and Partnership</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants in the FLW Programme to adopt the way of working developed, which emphasises building relationships for effective collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Endorsed, adopted and on-going implementation
<i>Delivering for Wales - Vision and Direction</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members or Boards of all partners to adopt the vision and engage with staff, Members and partners, incorporating it into relevant publications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt ‘Our Vision’ (page 7) and incorporate into relevant publications
<i>Fit for Purpose - Refreshing Governance: Improving Performance and Accountability</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the Governance Principles as a model for any future designation. Undertake a more detailed review of current governance against the Principles and make recommendations for change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Undertake a detailed review of current governance against the Principles (page 11) and report back to JAC with any recommendations for change.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes management bodies to adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement and work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales (appended below) ➤ through the Future Landscapes programme work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes.
<i>Fit for Purpose - Innovations in Resourcing</i>	

<i>“first steps to realising the Proposition”</i>	Wye Valley AONB Partnership action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the development of a long term resourcing strategy which maps out short, medium and long terms opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3–5 year AONB Unit Budget projections updated half-yearly and reported to AONB Steering Group. ➤ 5 yearly AONB Management Plan Review provides medium to long term strategic perspective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Government in partnership with the AONBs to produce proposals for a more secure resourcing model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Endorse and support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate charitable and legacy funding opportunities with organisations such as the Community Foundation in Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finalise agreement with Herefordshire Community Foundation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a consensus to inform the direction and measures emerging from EU Transition to secure appropriate measures and delivery mechanism for sustainable land management in designated landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage in debate in collaboration with National Association for AONBs, including on a shared response to the Agriculture chapter in Welsh Government ‘Sustainable Management of Natural Resources’ consultation.
<i>Fit for Purpose - Driving Well-being and Resilience</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated landscape management organisations and partnerships to further develop and refine their own understanding of local economic resilience and economic opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evidence gathering primarily through 5 yearly review of AONB Management Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, Designated Landscapes to adopt the concept of place planning as a mechanism to connect communities with places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Primarily through 5 yearly review of AONB Management Plan, also maintaining close liaison with Town/Parish/Community Councils, local groups and volunteer networks engagement with Neighbourhood Development Plans in England.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen collaboration and support between the designated landscapes and areas with UNESCO Global Geopark, UNESCO World Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status and International Dark Sky Reserves to maximise economic and education benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consolidate links as appropriate with Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, Brecon Beacons Fforest Fawr Geopark, Blaenavon and Ironbridge World Heritage Sites and the Brecon Beacons Dark-Sky Reserve. Support Herefordshire’s mapping and designation of Environmental Lighting Zones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify mechanisms by which the designated landscapes can build ecosystem resilience based on the results of the SoNaRR and the priorities in the Natural Resources Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the development of the local Area Statement(s) with Natural Resources Wales and collaborate on evaluating the SoNaRR (State of Natural Resources Report) results and the Natural Resources Policy priorities to

<i>“first steps to realising the Proposition”</i>	Wye Valley AONB Partnership action
	help identify mechanisms that will build ecosystem resilience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review funding priorities for Sustainable Development Fund and other investments by the designated landscapes and partners in order to ensure their effectiveness in supporting local economic initiatives based on local priorities and need, linking to place planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support Welsh Government with any review of SDF ➤ Review funding priorities and investments by the AONB Partnership to ensure effectiveness in supporting local economic initiatives based on local priorities and need, linking to place planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in dialogue about the urgent needs for broadband connectivity whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue liaison with local planning authorities, Town/Parish/Community Councils, local community groups and developers, as appropriate.

The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM will meet on 20th July to consider the responses to publication of *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* as part of taking forward the delivery of the identified priorities. It will also be an opportunity to review actions the partners are already taking and to plan further collaborations and implementations.

The Cross Party Group for Rural Affairs at the National Assembly for Wales will also discuss the *Future Landscape: delivering for Wales* report. Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas and Prof Terry Marsden have been invited to attend and speak.

Background

The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group includes academics, entrepreneurs, health and well-being specialists, senior figures in non-governmental organisations and senior representatives from designated landscapes, chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM.

Andrew Blake (AONB Manager) and Matthew Lewis (chair of TOWP and Monmouthshire’s Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager) have both been involved in the Future Landscapes Wales programme, alongside other officers and members from across the Welsh AONBs, National Parks and other relevant organisations.