

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Monday, 30 September
2019

Committee:
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Date: Tuesday, 8 October 2019
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Shropshire Room, Craven Arms Community Centre, Newington Way,
Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9PS

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

James Williamson (Chairman)	Gillian Binks
Hilary Claytonsmith (Vice Chairman)	Sarah Bury
Cecilia Motley (Vice Chairman)	Veronica Cossons
Heather Kidd	Helen Dale
Robert Tindall	Ian Dormor
David Turner	Charles Edwards
Chris Turley	Patrick Edwards
Alison Caffyn	Carol Griffiths
George Chancellor	Robert Harris
Adrian Cullis	Lizzie Hulton-Harrop
Chris Naylor	Alan Jones
Andrew Wood	Jenny Joy
Mark Hughes	Bill Klemperer
John Long	Sue Lee
David Mills	Hazel MacDowell
Steve Pennington	Ronald Repath
John Pritchard	Leo Smith
Sonja Belchere	Donna Tavenor

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence

2 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 1 - 4)

The note of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 is attached for confirmation

3 Appointment of Chair, Vice Chairs and six seats on Strategy & Performance Committee

4 Report of the Glover Review (Pages 5 - 16)

This paper provides a summary of the Glover Review final report and some topics for initial discussion.

5 Environment & Climate Emergency (Pages 17 - 40)

This paper sets out:

- background on national and local declaration of emergencies
- draft recommendations to the Councils from the AONB Partnership on nature recovery; on farming and land management; and on development, energy, transport and tourism.
- questions for a workshop to identify priority actions.

6 Judicial Review regarding implementation of the Habitats Directive, River Clun SAC

The meeting will receive an update from Paul Hayward, Environment Agency

7 Proposed Development Plan Document for the AONB (Pages 41 - 42)

This paper proposes a planning policy Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Shropshire Hills AONB.

8 Ironbridge Power Station Site Redevelopment (Pages 43 - 48)

This paper provides an opportunity for a brief discussion on the Ironbridge Power Station redevelopment proposal.

9 Capacity Building project - Youth engagement and feasibility for ongoing leadership activity with the Partnership (Pages 49 - 50)

This paper sets out a process of youth engagement for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

10 Date of Next Meetings



Shropshire Hills AONB
Partnership

8 October 2019

9.30 am

Item

Public

MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2019 9.30 - 11.10 AM

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Local Authorities

Shropshire Council

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)

Cllr Robert Tindall

Cllr David Turner

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member

Alison Caffyn

Individual Member

George Chancellor

Individual Member

James Williamson (Chair)

Town & Parish Council representative

Hilary Claytonsmith

Town & Parish Council representative

Yvonne Holyoak

Town & Parish Council representative

Mark Hughes

Town & Parish Council representative

Steve Pennington

British Horse Society

Ronald Repath

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Sarah Bury

Land Life & Livelihoods

Robert Harris

Longmynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

Natural England

Emma Johnson

Ramblers Association

Charles Edwards

Shropshire Geological Society

David C Smith

Strettons Civic Society

Ian Dormor

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council

Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Staff
Team

Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

Alison Jones (Clun Catchment Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB Trust

Anthony Morgan

Severn Rivers Trust

Mike Morris

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the arrangements for the Annual Tour which would follow the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence had been received from Gill Binks (Caring for God's Acre), Veronica Cossons (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Paul Davis (Shropshire Hills Tourism), Carol Griffiths (NFU), Bill Klemperer (Historic England), John Long (Individual Member), Hazel McDowall (Natural England), David McGlade (Offa's Dyke Association), John Pritchard (Parish Council rep), Martin Pye (Parish Council rep), Chris Turley (Telford & Wrekin Council) and Andrew Wood (Individual Member).

2 Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 5th March 2019 had been circulated.
- 2.2 Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting of the AONB Partnership held on 5th March 2019 be approved as a true record.

3 Brief Updates

- 3.1 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided brief updates on matters of relevance to the Partnership.
- 3.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that the AONB Management Plan and revised Terms of Reference would need to be approved by both Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council and that reports would be taken to the relevant Cabinets in June and July.
- 3.3 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that the biennial membership review would be carried out later in the summer and clarified the process that would be followed.
- 3.4 The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the Leader, Chief Executive and Director of Place would be visiting the AONB and the office to learn more about the work that the team were doing.

4 Capacity Building Project - AONB Partnership Draft Business Plan and Skills Audit

- 4.1 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided Members with the draft of a business plan to guide future activity and a skills audit for members.
- 4.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that the draft business plan had been developed following two facilitated workshops involving both the AONB Team and the Partnership's Strategy and Performance Committee. He commented that the Plan focussed on the activity of the Team, but the Partnership itself also had an important role in the

influencing and delivery model of the AONB structure and that this should be recognised in the Plan.

- 4.3 Cllr Tindall stated that he was a member of the South Planning Committee and that he felt that if the AONB Partnership was made a statutory planning consultee, it would enable a more in-depth response to be given. He felt that whilst the majority of the applications within the AONB were not controversial, where they were, this would enhance recognition of the AONB. The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that the NAAONB was campaigning for statutory consultee status for AONB organisations. The Chairman commented that there would be a resource implication for the AONB Partnership if this were to happen.
- 4.4 Mr Hughes commented that young people could be engaged through climate change, there was local interest in planting trees and something could go in the Parish newsletter.
- 4.5 Ms Johnson commented that there may be funding available through the LEP as the 'Net Gain' was developed. The AONB Partnership Manager commented that the Marches Nature Partnership had been successful in forming better links with the LEP.
- 4.6 The AONB Partnership Manager urged all Members to complete the Skills Audit.

5 Capacity Building Project - Shropshire Hills AONB Trust Draft Business Plan and support sought from Partnership Members

- 5.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which set out the Business Plan of the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust and set out areas of joint working and ways that Partnership members may be able to support the Trust.
- 5.2 Mr Anthony Morgan, Chair of the AONB Trust reminded members that the Trust was a charity independent of the AONB Partnership, but the two bodies were linked as the Partnership nominated trustees to the Trust.
- 5.3 Mr Morgan commented that the Trust needed more volunteers specially to help with fund raising and help to increase the membership of the Friends of the AONB. Suggestions were made about the 'Fix the Fort' appeal for Caer Caradoc.
- 5.4 Resolved:
- a) That the AONB Partnership note the AONB Trust's Business Plan and its priorities and
 - b) That George Chancellor and Veronica Cossons be reappointed as nominated trustees

6 'Unmuddying the Waters' Project

- 6.1 Members received the report of the Clun Catchment Officer which outlined the planned delivery of the Environment Agency's "Unmuddying the Waters" project in the Clun catchment.
- 6.2 Members were advised that a two-year funding agreement had been made with the Environment Agency to fund Alison Jones as the Clun Catchment Officer and that alongside

this there was a capital works budget for the project. The aims and objectives of the project were then outlined to members.

6.3 Members welcomed the project.

7 Water Environment Grant - 'Teme Onny Clun' Project

7.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided background on the joint "Teme-Onny-Clun" project between the AONB Partnership and the Severn Rivers Trust.

7.2 Mike Morris, CEO Severn Rivers Trust, thanked the AONB Partnership for their support for their project and outlined the aims of the project.

7.3 Members welcomed the project and commented that it was a good example of how the AONB Partnership could work with other organisations to deliver national funding locally.

8 Judicial Review regarding the Implementation of the Habitats Directive, River Clun SAC

8.1 Paul Hayward from Environment Agency had been unavailable and it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

9 Ironbridge Power Station Site Redevelopment Masterplan Consultation

9.1 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided background on the proposed redevelopment of the Ironbridge Power Station site.

9.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that after a large amount of site clearance the proposals included a mixed development including around 1,000 houses and that a large part of the land earmarked for the housing was agricultural land to the west of the brownfield site.

9.3 Mr Turner expressed concern about the impact on the surrounding area during the development of the site as the impact of the extra vehicular traffic could lead to rat-running on unsuitable minor roads. There were two planning applications expected for the site.

9.4 Ms Claytonsmith commented that she had attended one of the stakeholder events and that it appeared that the proposals had been presented as a fait accompli. She also expressed concern regarding the impact of additional traffic on the area and commented that it was "the right project in the wrong place".

9.5 A discussion took place regarding the proposals and the AONB Partnership Manager thanked members for their contribution and stated that he would include their comments in the AONB Partnership's response to the consultation and liaise with other organisations.

10 Date of Next Meeting

10.1 Members were advised that the next meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership would be held on Tuesday 8 October 2019 at 9.30am.



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	<u>Item</u> 4
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8th October 2019

REPORT OF THE GLOVER REVIEW – INITIAL DISCUSSION

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper provides a summary of the Glover Review final report and some topics for initial discussion.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to consider the proposals in the Glover review report and the implications for the Shropshire Hills AONB.

Background

After about a year of taking evidence, meetings and visits, the final report of the Glover Review was published on 21st September 2019. Some of the key recommendations had been trailed in media coverage and the letter of interim findings in July, but much of the detail only emerged in the final report.

The published summary of the report with the 27 proposals is reproduced in Appendix 1. Some other key passages of the report relevant to us are reproduced here:

New legal purposes – proposed for National Parks and AONBs:

The exact wording will no doubt be subject to debate and legal discussion, but the substance of what they should be aiming to do, we think, can be achieved through the following:

- 1. Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage.*
- 2. Actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation's health and wellbeing.*
- 3. Foster the economic and community vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.*

To properly strengthen AONBs, we propose:

- Giving them the same reformed statutory purposes (and ensuring that the 'Sandford Principle' also applies) as for National Parks. This reflects the reality that AONBs deliver the same purposes as National Parks.*

- *Increasing their funding*
- *Giving them statutory consultee status to strengthen their role in the planning system*
- *Renaming them 'National Landscapes'. Their national importance should be properly reflected by something much less unwieldy that elevates them alongside National Parks.*

Duties of public bodies

The requirement of 'regard' to landscapes' existing purposes should be strengthened to one of 'furthering' the reformed purposes. Second, a requirement should be established in law on relevant bodies to support the development and implementation of national landscapes' Management Plans.

Nature recovery

National landscapes therefore can, and should be playing a major role in enhancing the resilience of the network, by providing large areas of high quality wildlife habitat. They should be at the centre of coordinated action to integrate effective ecological networks with landscape objectives and other uses, including farming, education, recreation, tourism and the provision of other ecosystem services. To do so, however, requires Nature Recovery Networks to be built on a sound foundation of:

- *a clear national strategy, closely geared into local delivery*
- *strong partnerships and the agreement of common goals among diverse actors*
- *sufficient on the ground advisory staff and other capacity, including accurate data*
- *being fully aligned with a range of policy tools, such as ELMS and net gain.*

The design and implementation of Nature Recovery Network actions on the ground in national landscapes must take momentum not only from conservation and landscape led policy but also other government priorities, including, for example, the aim of achieving net zero carbon emissions and steps toward more climate change resilient landscapes.

New Environmental Land Management system

Individual Management Plans should be the guiding framework for setting landscape-scale priorities for future payments for public goods which support and enhance the value of nature and natural beauty in all its forms.

All other forms of environmental payments should be made in line with the Management Plans too, for example, grants for woodland planting or rural development.

We want to see the special significance of national landscapes for biodiversity, natural beauty and cultural identity reflected in decisions about ELMS.

We do not propose that national landscapes directly administer the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. Moving the complex business of payments to 44 separate bodies does not make sense. Rather, their Management Plans should set the framework for all ELMS payments within their landscapes. The focus first should be on working with others to set priorities, and supporting farmers with the transition.

Planning

AONB bodies should become statutory consultees in the planning system. They need to be formally consulted on planning cases, and have a formal voice in the decision making process. This does not mean AONBs should become consumed with putting in advice on

every single planning application; they don't do this now, nor would they be expected to. They should agree with their local planning authorities what they should be consulted upon and be free to comment if something of significance appears.

Some additional resource and expertise is likely to be necessary too, but the vast majority already employ officers with planning expertise. There is also expertise across the wider family of national landscapes that can be better shared and some additional resource could be provided at a national level through the new National Landscapes Service we propose, reducing duplication across all 44 bodies.

We heard in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB how two local authorities came together to support a single Development Plan for the AONB. This is a good model. We want AONBs to work with local authorities to develop local plans and policies which set out a vision, explain how conservation and recreational purposes will be implemented and how the needs and requirements of the local community will be met within the broader context of achieving sustainable development appropriate to these nationally important landscapes.

Landscapes for everyone

Our national landscapes should be alive for people, places where everyone is actively welcomed in and there are unrivalled opportunities to enjoy their natural beauty and all it offers: landscapes for all. We need:

- England's national landscapes to reach out and actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support the nation's health and wellbeing. Their legal purposes should be explicit about this, and the same purpose applied to AONBs as to National Parks.*
- National landscapes must develop ambitious, targeted plans for helping those who currently fail to benefit from our most special places to do so, and be held to account for delivery. This must include excellent, but currently local, examples being established everywhere. The National Landscapes Service should have a key role in spreading these best practices and holding bodies to account for delivery.*
- Ambitious programmes should include, but not be limited to:*
 - children and young people;*
 - Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities;*
 - people with health conditions and disabilities;*
 - volunteering.*
- A truly warm and helpful welcome, wherever you want to go – better signs, information and websites are needed, and critically, a National Landscapes Ranger Service.*
- Our national landscapes must become our most welcoming and easily accessible places. Here, more than anywhere else, people can get out into nature and enjoy it. This means joining up with others to make the most of what is already there, but also asking ourselves whether they could be more accessible than they are now.*

Tourism

National landscapes should also be encouraged to bid to become 'tourism zones' under the new Tourism Sector Deal, helping pioneer truly sustainable tourism. We hope they will be encouraged to apply to become tourism zones under the new Tourism Sector Deal. Such

areas would see destination management organisations, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, and local businesses working together to develop solutions that address local market failures in relation to tourism. For areas that are successful in their bid to become a Tourism Zone, a package of support would be offered and they would create a sustainable development plan to reduce environmental impacts.

Living in Landscapes

Our landscape management teams need to think hard about the various communities in their area: farmers and landowners, businesses, towns and villages and above all, schools. How can they help those various communities really benefit from living and working in a national landscape? How can they ensure that they identify with the brand, and are inspired to take forward the living past into the future? How can they create the long-term partnerships with these communities that will ensure our national landscapes have a sustainable future? Positive action is required here.

Our landscapes should encourage the kinds of economic and social activity that promotes renewed purposes of national landscapes.

We want to see a National Landscapes Affordable Rural Housing Association formed to help meet the need. It should have clear, well-designed purposes and a defined scope (and in particular 'rural' should mean 'rural') with leadership from the new National Landscapes Service. It should be debt financed (the equity should be publicly owned) and should attract environmental, social and government investment funds. In addition it might in limited circumstances get some 'public monies for public goods' as farming support is reformed.

Local planning authorities in AONBs should also make use of the provision that allows them to demand on-site affordable housing contributions on all sites, including developments of five homes or fewer.

National Parks are well placed to take on an active role in coordinating and promoting transport. They are the bodies best placed to communicate with visitors, and to have a single strategic vision. We think that the pressures and need for strategy is the same in AONBs.

Governance

National Parks should be governed by smaller 9-12 person boards, in line with best practice in governance as recommended for charities and companies. The board should be advised by a partnership group, bringing together stakeholders of all kinds, to ensure the board is well informed about a wide range of interests and specialist expertise.

The structure above should apply to AONBs where possible. We recognise that for some smaller ones it may be overelaborate, or challenging to put in place. For larger ones, it is appropriate.

AONBs may choose to establish similar Planning Sub-Committees, but, given their role is not to decide planning matters but to comment, hopefully in future as statutory consultees, they should ensure such committees are proportionate in size.

AONBs may also have on their main board of 9 to 12 one local authority member drawn from the local authorities who contribute funding to the AONB, determined either by the agreement of those local authorities, or if not, by ballot.

Finally, we think there is merit in the idea of a citizen service for selecting community representatives for main National Park and AONB boards, and would like to see the new National Landscapes Service work with national landscapes to trial this.

Funding

Central government funding should continue, and be both extended and secured across a five-year period. However the system needs to move away from over-reliance on core grants towards more diverse, larger and more sustainable flows of funds – towards a new funding model. We also recommend stopping the complex routing of funds via Defra. Responsibility should pass to the new National Landscapes Service. The payment of AONBs in arrears, should also be addressed.

The National Landscapes Service should negotiate a multi-annual financial settlement with Defra which both secures existing resources, services and programmes, and also ensures a focus on growth, innovation and efficiencies.

The settlement should cover the current grant in aid distributed by a modernised and simplified funding formula to all existing National Parks and AONBs and in future to all national landscapes. No organisation should receive a cut in grant.

There should be a new and larger settlement for AONBs and this should include new resources to reflect their enhanced purposes, responsibilities and activities.

We believe that in time, there should be an across-the-board formula for national landscapes using a banding system to reflect the imprecision of a formula, containing a number of elements, the weighting of which would need to be carefully calibrated.

In the meantime, AONBs need an uplift. We believe their total funding should be doubled from the current £6.7m to £13.4m, with the uplift in funding that would no doubt come from a revised funding formula implemented over a longer period.

The local authority funding element for AONBs should continue.

Any new national landscapes must be funded with new money.

Importantly, alongside central government funding changes, national landscapes should prepare medium to long term financial plans that reflect a more diverse range of income sources to their organisations, complementing core central government grant-aid with growth in philanthropic giving, trading activities and large-scale externally-funded projects.

This should draw ambitiously on the potential of natural capital principles.

The financial model for national landscapes should be diverse to ensure growth, stability and a greater sense of self-direction.

The new National Landscapes Service has a key role to play in finance. It should be entrepreneurial: it should understand its brand value, enter into commercially successful partnerships, be skilled at fundraising and achieve efficiencies in operations by encouraging parts of the system to work together.

There should be an ambitious commercial and philanthropic programme of fundraising.

Either a wing of the new National Landscapes Service or a separate but constitutionally-linked charity should be set up with clear charitable aims, strongly commercial and well-connected trustees and a professional team skilled in fundraising.

Next steps

It is important to remember that this is an independent report to government, and while the designated landscape bodies will be able to take on directly some of its recommendations straight away, many of the more significant ones will require government action. The government's response to the report is therefore vital as a next stage. We have no indications of the timescale for this, but we understand that senior staff resource at Defra has been allocated to it.

The NAAONB is meeting with Lord Gardiner on the 9th October to discuss the Environment Bill, the duty of regard, and the role of designated landscapes in nature recovery. This will, amongst other things, ensure the Colchester Declaration maintains profile during this spending review. They are also meeting with Marian Spain (CEO) and Tony Juniper (Chair) of Natural England on 23rd October. They will discuss the practicalities of the central role of AONBs in nature recovery, and how we work together with Natural England to further the recommendations of the Review. The next meeting of the NAAONB Board on 31st October will include a substantive discussion on the Review recommendations and the next steps the Association needs to take to progress delivery. Finally, Lord Gardiner has confirmed attendance at the NAAONB Chairmen's meeting on 28th November and will be speaking on the outcomes of the Review. This meeting will also include a presentation by Maxwell Ayamba on the challenges of people from black and minority ethnic communities using designated landscapes.

For the AONB Partnership, we need to engage actively with the national discussion, and input to any further formal response from the AONB Family to the Review report.

There are some aspects of the proposals which are likely to require primary legislation (e.g. new purposes, creation of a National Landscapes Service) or secondary legislation (e.g. making AONB organisations statutory consultees in planning). Some other proposals would need actioning by Defra but could happen any time (e.g. increased funding). Some aspects can be progressed by us now and would reinforce some existing as well as some newer directions (e.g. priority to nature recovery, outreach work with under-represented groups) though these are also resource dependent.

The governance implications for AONBs will probably take time to emerge. The Review report says nothing specifically about new Conservation Boards. It does acknowledge the higher status of the Cotswolds and Chilterns which have these, and mentions 'the challenges of the Conservation Board model' (apparently in the context of this not being strong enough). It seems highly unlikely that Defra will wish in the short term to progress our proposal to create a Conservation Board. Our proposal may be overtaken by changes arising from the Glover Review, or this may still be an appropriate mechanism – this is not yet clear. The report does acknowledge that different structures may be appropriate for larger AONBs. It does not however seem fully to recognise the fundamental difference between National Park Boards that govern independent legal organisations, and AONB Joint Advisory Committees and their sub-groups which are advisory only. There may be a spectrum of responsibility and roles for different structures, but as we know there are along this some binary differences of where the final accountability lies (i.e. with the local authorities or with an independent body). Unless a new model emerges, the same main options of structure for AONBs are likely to remain.

List of Background Papers

Glover Review final report at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Landscapes review: final report - summary of findings

Appendix 1 Landscapes review: final report September 2019 - summary of findings

The underlying argument of our review, which covers England, is that our system of national landscapes should be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing. Big ambitions are made possible by these 44 areas working together in new ways to become more than the sum of their parts.

We want this to happen not as an end in itself but because more must be done for nature and natural beauty. More must be done for people who live in and visit our landscapes. And a lot more must be done to meet the needs of our many fellow citizens who do not know the countryside, or do not always feel welcome in it, but should be able to enjoy it. Our landscapes are open and free to all, but can seem exclusive.

We think this can only happen if we are honest about what doesn't work at the moment and put in place a system which can do better.

Today, we have a system which is fragmented, sometimes marginalised and often misunderstood. Indeed it is not really a system at all, but 10 National Parks, who do not always work together effectively, and an entirely separate network of 34 less powerful Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). They have different purposes from National Parks, vastly less money, but sometimes greater pressures. Yet they cover areas that are more visited, sometimes more biodiverse and are just as beautiful.

We believe this duplication wastes resources and diminishes ambition.

That is why our central proposal is to bring National Parks and AONBs together as part of one family of national landscapes, served by a shared National Landscapes Service (NLS). This will give them a bigger voice, bigger ambition and a new way of working to meet new challenges.

Within this family, of course not every member will be the same. Local identity matters. National Parks need to keep their titles, at least their current levels of funding, and local autonomy, especially over planning.

The current system of governance for National Parks (and, as we'll explore later, AONBs) should be reformed substantially. Time after time we have heard and seen that National Park boards are too big, do not do a good job in setting a strategic direction and are deeply unrepresentative of England's diverse communities.

Of the almost 1,000 people on National Park and AONB boards today, the great majority are male, many are of retirement age and a tiny fraction are of black, Asian or minority ethnicities. This is wrong for organisations which are funded by the nation to serve everyone.

We also think what are now AONBs should be strengthened, with increased funding, governance reform, new shared purposes with National Parks, and a greater voice on development.

We think the current cumbersome title 'AONB' should be replaced. Our suggestion is that they should be called National Landscapes.

We would also like to see the encouragement of a wider range of non-designated systems of landscape protection, which should be members of the national landscapes family and served by the NLS.

This ought to include new areas of forest, along the lines of the successful National Forest in the East Midlands. We give our strong support for proposals for new urban National Parks, such as the one proposed for the West Midlands and the one already underway in London. We also praise the impressive work being done to bring the South Pennines together as a regional park and to create a marine park in Plymouth.

Our overriding conclusion is that without structural reform and greater shared ambition and status, our national landscapes will always struggle to do more than make an incremental difference.

Summary findings

The review focused on 5 areas:

1. Landscapes alive for nature and beauty
2. Landscapes for everyone
3. Living in landscapes
4. More special places
5. New ways of working

They are not separate but part of one ambition: to strengthen the natural beauty of England's landscapes in order to serve the country better by improving their biodiversity, and the lives of people who work in them, live in them and enjoy them.

For clarity when reading this summary, we refer to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as AONBs, and use 'national landscapes' to refer to the two designations of National Parks and AONBs together.

Summary 1. Landscapes alive for nature and beauty

The 2010 Making Space for Nature review and the most recent 2016 State of Nature report are explicit about the crisis of nature and what needs to be done to bring about a recovery. There is no need, in this review, to restate the excellent and mostly chilling analysis they contain, except to say that we agree and we want to see national landscapes lead the response.

Proposals

Proposal 1: National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature, and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service

Proposal 2: The state of nature and natural capital in our national landscapes should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action

Proposal 3: Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law

Proposal 4: National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries

Proposal 5: A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes

Proposal 6: A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

Summary 2. Landscapes for everyone

National Parks were created in part to provide a healing space, both mentally and physically, for the many who had given so much to protect our country during the Second World War. They were meant for everybody. Much has changed in the 70 years since. Modern Britain is a very different place socially and demographically. Today we recognise diversity as the mark of a healthy and resilient society. However, many landscape bodies have not moved smartly enough to reflect this changing society, and in some cases show little desire to do so.

We want our nation's most cherished landscapes to fulfill their original mission for people, providing unrivalled opportunities for enjoyment, spiritual refreshment and in turn supporting the nation's health and wellbeing.

Proposals

Proposal 7: A stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscapes Service

Proposal 8: A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child

Proposal 9: New long-term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors

Proposal 10: Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing

Proposal 11: Expanding volunteering in our national landscapes

Proposal 12: Better information and signs to guide visitors

Proposal 13: A ranger service in all our national landscapes, part of a national family

Proposal 14: National landscapes supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism

Proposal 15: Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family

Proposal 16: Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes

Summary 3. Living in landscapes

Our system of national landscapes works best when it works with people on its side. We can all agree that a village that is lived in, with an active school, people who work, and who are part of a living tradition, is better than a sterile place that is full of shuttered homes, empty pubs and derelict shops.

If we are serious about demonstrating the value of 'lived in' landscapes to the global family of national landscapes, then we need to be serious about the people who live in them, and show how it's possible to offer meaningful social and economic support for them.

Proposals

Proposal 17: National landscapes working for vibrant communities

Proposal 18: A new National Landscapes Housing Association to build affordable homes

Proposal 19: A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes

Summary 4. More special places

Almost a quarter – 24.5% – of England is already covered by national landscapes.

We think there is a case for several larger AONBs to take on National Park candidate status, as well as for a new AONB (or National Landscape as we propose they are called in future).

The success of the National Forest is also a model which should be replicated.

We also think that a changing nation needs new ways to come together to support natural beauty and access.

Proposals

Proposal 20: New designated landscapes and a new National Forest

Proposal 21: Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition

Proposal 22: A better designations process

Summary 5. New ways of working

We want our landscapes to focus on enhancing natural beauty, supporting communities and visitors. But to do it better, we think they need to change and work together more.

Proposals

Proposal 23: Stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes

Proposal 24: AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes

Proposal 25: A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts

Proposal 26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society

Proposal 27: A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising

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<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	
8 th October 2019	5

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY – RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TWO COUNCILS AND WORKSHOP SESSION TO IDENTIFY NEW ACTIONS

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Summary

This paper sets out:

- background on national and local declaration of emergencies
- draft recommendations to the Councils from the AONB Partnership on nature recovery; on farming and land management; and on development, energy, transport and tourism.
- questions for a workshop to identify priority actions.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to:

- a) comment on and endorse the recommendations to the Councils
- b) participate in a workshop discussion to identify priority actions.

Background

National In May 2019 the House of Commons declared an Environment and Climate Emergency, following the finding of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change that to avoid a more than 1.5°C rise in global warming, global emissions would need to fall by around 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by around 2050. The declaration recognises the devastating impact that volatile and extreme weather will have on UK food production, water availability, public health and through flooding and wildfire damage. It also notes that the UK is currently missing almost all of its biodiversity targets, with an alarming trend in species decline, and that cuts of 50% to the funding of Natural England are counterproductive to tackling those problems. It calls on the Government to increase the ambition of the UK's climate change targets under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve net zero emissions before 2050, to increase support for and set ambitious, short-term targets for the roll-out of renewable and low carbon energy and transport, and to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors. It further calls on the Government to lay before the House within the next six months urgent proposals to restore the UK's natural environment and to deliver a circular, zero waste economy.

Councils On 15th May Shropshire Council declared a Climate Emergency and its intention to become carbon neutral by 2030. The declaration did not however make any reference to nature decline. The Council has set up a member task and finish group on the Climate Emergency, and an officer group, to which the AONB Manager has been invited. Recommendations and output from the Partnership will be taken back to this group.

On 25th July 2019 Telford & Wrekin Council declared a Climate Emergency with a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030 and to remove single use plastics from its operations. Again there is no reference to nature.

NAAONB At its annual conference in July 2019 the National Association for AONBs launched the Colchester Declaration on nature recovery in AONBs – see Appendix 1. This sets out a firm intention to significantly step up the scale and pace of action on nature recovery in the context of the Environment and Climate Emergency. The National Association and staff from AONBs are now working up the detail of how the declaration will be delivered.

What role does the AONB Partnership have and how do we raise our game?

The AONB Partnership has been championing shifting to low carbon and nature recovery for a long time, and the declaration of emergencies by Parliament and Councils should be welcomed. However those by the Councils do not cover the environmental dimensions adequately. All the declarations need to be backed up by action. Virtually all of the actions in the AONB Management Plan contribute to nature recovery and lowering carbon emissions.

The Partnership group and the team together have the roles of delivery and of influencing. Our own direct delivery is relatively small and targeted. It is largely dependent on capacity of the team, effectiveness of what we do and our priorities. Partner organisations also have a lot of delivery capacity and how we can work effectively together is an important factor. To influence well, we need clear thinking and positions, and effective engagement. The Glover Review should help to reinforce our role by raising our expectations, influence and capacity.

How do we best harness the energy of Partnership members? They can bring their knowledge and also take back things from the Partnership to their organisations and/or communities. They can introduce the staff team to people they know locally and involve them in discussions.

How can we act on something so big?

Conversations on these topics can lead to people feeling powerless. It is worth thinking about where we fit in and how to approach it. Action is needed from:

Governments Businesses Communities Individuals

These layers interconnect – as individuals we can do things directly ourselves, as well as join groups and with others in our communities, and exercise our influence on businesses as consumers and workers, and on governments as voters and citizens. Government can influence businesses and individuals. Our government can influence those of other countries. All the layers are needed, we can't just say someone else should act on this.

The most useful part of action planning is focussing on what we need to do next. We can say what we're already doing, but we know this isn't enough. We need to keep an eye on the targets and timescales and challenge ourselves as to whether we are doing enough. But if we can't see all the steps to get to a target, we have to move towards it anyway with our best knowledge, and the later steps will become more obvious when we have made the first ones.

Draft recommendations to Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council and rationale

Recommendation 1 - Nature recovery: The Councils must formally declare that nature decline is as threatening an emergency as climate change and that both are inextricably linked. Also, that nature recovery and restoring ecosystems provide some of the essential solutions to reaching zero carbon emissions, as well as addressing many other factors vital for our survival and quality of life. These are not just distant global issues, they are the main challenges now for the Shropshire Hills.

"The IPBES assessment has shown the strong interrelationship between climate change, the loss of biodiversity and human wellbeing. Climate change has been identified as a primary driver of biodiversity loss, already altering every part of nature. Likewise, the loss of biodiversity contributes to climate change, for example when we destroy forests we emit carbon dioxide, the major "human-produced" greenhouse gas.

We cannot solve the threats of human-induced climate change and loss of biodiversity in isolation. We either solve both or we solve neither. As policymakers around the world grapple with the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss, it is essential that they understand the linkages between the two so that their decisions and actions address both."

From article **"Loss of biodiversity is just as catastrophic as climate change"** 6th May 2019, Sir Robert Watson - Chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and former Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

We need to halt and reverse the loss of good quality habitats. In the Shropshire Hills this is still happening mostly through land management practices. Development is also a factor. To reverse nature loss we also need to restore and recreate habitat networks across the landscape. The Stepping Stones project is one example of where this is starting to happen. It needs more resourcing to really deliver, and we need more similar projects in other areas. (See link to Wildlife Trusts 2018 paper 'Towards a Wilder Britain' at Background papers).

The Marches Nature Partnership and Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership need proper resourcing to raise their influence and activity, working with the LEP and other sectors.

A whole range of mechanisms for looking after nature need to deliver more, including:

- Planning decisions and enforcement action by various regulators to prevent direct harm
- Agriculture and land use policy supporting sustainable activity
- Government schemes for farm conservation with good incentives and minimal barriers, and good advice for private landowners
- Ownership of key sites by conservation bodies and trusts and linking them with wider landscape
- Ambitious projects to recreate and restore habitats, needing public, private and third sector finance and partnership working
- Grassroots action by communities and individuals.

Like climate change, loss of nature can be subtle and not very visible. Our landscape still looks pretty, and may not appear to be in emergency. But we have lost and are losing 'bio-abundance' as well as biodiversity. As well as some extinctions, once common species are becoming rare. Baselines shift and people may not notice. Some 'keystone' species have an especially vital role in ecosystems, such as pollinators which enable crops and flowers to reproduce, earthworms which aerate soil, trees which bind river banks. We are already losing these and seeing the effects, but they can recover.

We need big programmes to engage and re-engage young people and adults with nature, to harness their energy and improve their wellbeing. Services need to join up to improve provision.

Recommendation 2 - Farming and land management for zero carbon and nature recovery:

The Councils have an important role shaping and influencing the future of their areas, as well as directly providing services. While they have less direct involvement in land management than some other factors, making change in this area will be vital to achieving net zero carbon emissions and nature recovery. The Councils must play an active part in this and resource their capacity to do this, including training of members and senior officers.

Agriculture accounts for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, through methane and nitrous oxide as well as CO₂. Ammonia is not a greenhouse gas but has serious implications for air quality and nature. The NFU's recent report sets out a plan to get UK agriculture to net zero by 2040, based on productive efficiency, carbon storage and bioenergy and renewables (see link at background papers). The high anticipated contribution of bioenergy in this may not be compatible with allowing enough capacity in the land for nature recovery. The RSA's Food, Farming and Countryside Commission calls for a farming and land policy which addresses climate and ecosystems while also delivering much better for health (see Appendix 2).

Land management also has a vital role for carbon sequestration, to help us reach net zero as a whole. Planting trees has a place in this, but this is about much more than carbon offsetting. Soils are a vital means of carbon storage, and they need better management to do this. Peatlands are especially important and need to stay wet - the AONB has only 44ha of peatland, but the lowlands of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have much more. Pastures store carbon, some of which is lost when the land is cultivated. Increasing the organic matter in soils will store more carbon as well as help with water retention and natural fertility, reducing the need for artificial fertilisers (the main source of nitrous oxide greenhouse gas). On pasture, soil organic matter can be raised by techniques such as mob grazing where stock are put at high densities for a short period onto tall sward pastures aiming to graze some of the vegetation, leave some and trample some into the soil.

More trees and woodland will help with carbon sequestration, as well as providing many other benefits, but offsetting shouldn't be seen as an easy way to avoid challenges of reducing emissions in other sectors. To be effective, trees planted need to be of suitable species for the location and the landscape, and need maintaining. Enthusiasm should be harnessed, but advice and support is needed. The availability of land can be an issue - at the current transition in agricultural policy many farmers are cautious of changes which reduce their options in future.

Some of the calls to cease livestock farming because of methane production and to convert grazed land to growing food for direct human consumption or for nature are too simplistic. Especially in the uplands, land which is less fertile will not grow human food directly, and ploughing sloping land can result in loss of soil and harm to rivers. We need also to remember that land can deliver multiple benefits - for example the best heathland conservation sites in the AONB are maintained by low intensity grazing which provides a food output. High quality pasture-fed livestock from nature-friendly low input systems has an important place in a low carbon agriculture and is not at all the same thing as intensive livestock rearing on arable-grown feeds.

The steps we need to take to zero carbon and nature recovery may alter the character of our landscape - but these changes can enhance it. Ecosystem functions matter, natural beauty is not a static thing, and the AONB designation should not be seen as a barrier to the right kind of change.

The New Environmental Land Management System will be a vital tool and needs the best thinking and engagement in its development to make sure it works well. There should be a collaborative programme of visits and workshops about zero carbon and nature friendly farming, as well as demonstration farms and links with universities.

Recommendation 3 – Development, energy, transport & tourism for zero carbon and nature recovery:

In these areas the Councils have a greater lead. Net zero and nature recovery cannot be achieved if the political and corporate focus is on economic growth at all costs. The goals of net zero and nature recovery need to be built into the Councils' visions at the highest levels. Doing this can deliver better quality of life for people as well as new forms of economic activity which are truly sustainable. On energy and transport we need to talk about managing demand as well as changing supply. This may mean people consuming less and travelling less. This future is not unthinkable, and can benefit people.

Planning policy and decisions are aiming to support sustainability, e.g. by providing homes close to where people work, but this isn't currently adequate to achieve carbon targets.

"Local Plans in England are not dealing with carbon dioxide emissions reduction effectively, nor are they consistently delivering the adaptation actions necessary to secure the long-term resilience of local communities. This inaction is partly due to a chronic lack of resources in local government, which had contributed to a loss of skills on energy and climate change."

RTPI 2019, Rising to the Climate Crisis – A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change

Natural capital needs to become a central principle in planning and economic development. The potential of natural flood management techniques and biodiversity net gain need to be maximised.

Renewable energy is a challenge for protected landscapes, and the only real potential conflict between conserving natural beauty and other environmental goals. Policies are against industrial scale developments in the AONB, while being positive about small scale renewables. To justify this, protected areas will increasingly need to make big contributions to reaching net zero in other ways.

The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee is running an enquiry on sustainable tourism, and some main points from our evidence of 12th September 2019 were:

- The huge challenges of net zero carbon emissions will mean structural change in the tourism industry as in every other part of the economy. There are however growth opportunities in expanded domestic markets and high-quality sustainable tourism products.
- Sustainability remains a fairly fringe consideration in many parts of the industry, and greater incentives and guidance are needed from government.
- Sustainable tourism needs to be planned in a collaborative way between the industry and public sector bodies on a location-specific basis. Much good practice exists, but many Destination Management Organisations are not equipped to lead on sustainability.

The Councils need to provide more support and leadership for tourism businesses on sustainability – addressing energy and transport, supporting plastic-free initiatives and managing as well as promoting our areas as environmentally sensitive destinations.

The emergency we have reached is partly the result of some extreme excesses which need to stop. But it is also created by lots of 'normal' behaviour by us – 'normal' agricultural practices, 'normal' amounts of travel and energy consumption. These norms cannot be sustained.

There isn't consensus about the problems, or the solutions. So alongside action, we need to keep raising these topics and challenging ourselves and others, and we can make progress. Because of natural processes, restoring nature will mean looking outside our own area. And we can't just aim for a carbon neutral Shropshire Hills AONB, or county or even a country. To respond to this global issue means we must aim for our place in a zero carbon world.

The 2017 report 'Zero Carbon Britain' contains some excellent ideas, and extracts are at Appendix 3.

Workshop session

For the workshop session we will split into three groups which members can choose:

1. Nature recovery
2. Farming and land management for zero carbon
3. Energy, transport and tourism for zero carbon

Questions: (all in the context of achieving nature recovery and zero carbon)

1. In a few minutes to start with, what's going well in the Shropshire Hills in the topic area of your group?
2. What further things can you or your organisation do on this topic, right now?
3. What support do you need from the AONB Partnership to do this?
4. What else should we be recommending to the Councils to do?

List of Background Papers

Minutes of Shropshire Council meeting 16th May 2019 <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/g3759/Printed%20minutes%2016th-May-2019%2010.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

Minutes of Telford & Wrekin Council meeting 25th July 2019
<https://democracy.telford.gov.uk/documents/g1170/Printed%20minutes%20Thursday%2025-Jul-2019%2018.00%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=1>

NFU September 2019 report Achieving Net Zero: Farming's 2040 Goal
<https://www.nfuonline.com/news/latest-news/achieving-net-zero-meeting-the-climate-change-challenge/>

The Wildlife Trusts 2018 Towards a Wilder Britain – Creating a Nature Recovery Network to bring back wildlife to every neighbourhood https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Nature_recovery_network_final.pdf

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

Appendix 1 NAAONB Colchester Declaration

Appendix 2 RSA report Our Future in the Land, Executive Summary

Appendix 3 Extracts from 2017 report Zero Carbon Britain – Making it Happen (Centre for Alternative Technology)

The Colchester Declaration 2019

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient – the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency we are demonstrating our readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

We believe

1. Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people
2. AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife
3. Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
4. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change
5. The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges

We pledge

By July 2020

1. To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.
2. To prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB

By 2024

1. To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans
2. To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero

By 2030

1. That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition
2. That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/ restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals
3. That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place
4. That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030

We call on Westminster and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable

Our Future in the Land



Food, Farming
& Countryside
Commission

Executive summary



Our future depends on the land. The land nourishes and supports us. It provides for our nutrition, our health and our wellbeing. Food and farming depend critically on the fate of the countryside. Those who live and work here are the stewards of this relationship but the responsibility for it rests with us all. Our own health and the health of the land are inextricably intertwined.

In the last 70 years, this relationship has been broken. Driven by poor policy and perverse incentives, the food and farming system has become one of the main drivers of human and ecosystem crisis. From deforestation, loss of wildlife and soil degradation, to widespread pollution and spiralling diet-related ill-health, people and planet have suffered alike. Far from being the sector that nourishes us, and the land on which we all depend, the system has damaged and depleted our precious and finite resources.

We have relied for too long on the hope that future technologies can repair the damage caused by this. Time is now running out. The actions that we take in the next ten years are critical: to recover and regenerate nature; and to restore health and wellbeing to both people and planet.

The good news is that people are now grasping the extent of this challenge; the call for collective and concerted action is rising. And everywhere, people are responding – shareholders and schoolchildren,

farms and food businesses, and in communities all around the UK. Whilst the challenges are complex and interconnected, we already have many of the tools we need to act.

The RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission is an independent inquiry established in November 2017, with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Chaired by Sir Ian Cheshire, 15 Commissioners were drawn from farming and food businesses, from public health and citizens groups, from thinktanks and universities. The work came at a particularly challenging time in the wake of the EU referendum. But from very early on, the Commissioners agreed that the focus of the work should not be defined by current circumstances. They wanted to tackle the bigger challenges facing the food, farming and countryside sector: from climate and ecosystem breakdown to rising rates of diet-related ill-health.

Commissioners also wanted to hear more from people who are not usually involved in these debates.

"I'm a farmer and I can't afford to buy the food I produce. How ridiculous is that?"

James, Peak District sheep farmer

Decades of policy to produce ever cheaper food has created perverse and detrimental consequences. Farm gate prices are low; and whilst food in the supermarkets is getting cheaper, the true cost of that policy is simply passed off elsewhere in society – in a degraded environment, spiraling ill-health and impoverished high streets. The UK has the third cheapest food amongst developed countries, but the highest food insecurity in Europe.

The cost of just one diet-related illness – Type 2 diabetes – to the NHS, and in lost work and benefits, is nearly £27bn a year.

“Tell you what lads, you'd want a thick skin to be a farmer right now. Only a matter of time until someone blames us for the disappearance of Shergar & Jimmy Hoffa...”

@willpenrieans on Twitter

Many farmers are at a loss to know what to do for the best. Agroecology or high-tech solutions? More intensification, extensification or diversification? And how to disinvest from investments made in good faith? We found farmers open to change but anxious, and locked into their current business models by debt, skills or circumstance.

In the UK, agriculture contributes 11 percent of GHG emissions, and is the biggest driver of wildlife loss, with 67 percent decline in the abundance of priority species since 1970 and 13 percent of them now close to extinction.

“People come here for the lifestyle. That's great, don't get me wrong. But will they stand for the council? Will they coach the kids' football team? Because at the same time the local bloke driving a tractor for £14,000 a year hasn't got a hope of living in this village.”

Mark, Nottinghamshire

Nowhere do conflicts in food, farming and the countryside show up more than in discussions about how we use our land and who decides. Debates have become polarised and it is the ground on which the battles for the future of farming and the countryside are being fought.

Only 8 percent of rural homes are affordable, compared to 20 percent in urban areas; weekly transport costs average £132 in rural areas compared to £71 in urban areas.

During our inquiry we heard many examples of people already taking action. Inspired by them, and as we conclude this phase of our work, the Commission's recommendations for actions are underpinned by three interdependent principles:

1. Healthy food is every body's business
2. Farming is a force for change
3. The countryside has to work for everyone

We also propose a framework for change to speed up the transition to a more sustainable food and farming system, where radical ambitions can be implemented at scale and at pace, through practical actions by governments, businesses and citizens.

Healthy food is every body's business

Healthier and life-enhancing diets mean more and better fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts and pulses, less and better meat and dairy, with livestock products coming from climate and nature-friendly production, with zero food waste, and rebuilding our connections with food producers and with each other.

Much attention is directed towards the challenge of feeding nine billion people by 2030. But we already produce more than enough for everyone in the world to eat well. Today, it is inefficiently and unsustainably produced, profligately wasted and unfairly distributed.

To understand how UK farming could contribute to a more sustainable and healthy diet, we explored reactions to this year's high-profile call from the EAT-Lancet Commission which included a recommendation to move to more plant-based diets. We brought farmers and others together with EAT-Lancet scientists, to model scenarios sensitive to the UK's specific conditions. The results highlighted significant areas of convergence, supporting sustainably-produced pasture-fed livestock to make the best of the UK landscape and climate.

This is the time for an historic drive to put health at the heart of our food system. Government holds many of the key levers and must take the lead, in partnerships with businesses and civil society. All effort, policy, legislation, money and resources must be directed towards implementing and accelerating a transition plan for climate, nature, and public health and wellbeing.

We recommend:

1. Levelling the playing field for a fair food system – good food must become good business
2. Committing to grow the UK supply of fruit, vegetables, nuts and pulses, and products from UK sustainable agriculture, and to using them more in everyday foods
3. Implementing world-leading public procurement, using this powerful tool to transform the market
4. Establishing collaborative community food plans help inform and implement national food strategies and meet the different needs of communities around the UK
5. Reconnecting people and nature to boost health and wellbeing

Farming is a force for change, unleashing a fourth agricultural revolution driven by public values

The case for change is now urgent and unassailable - farming systems must change radically to become more sustainable. This is a challenge as fundamental as decarbonising our energy system. Many farmers around the world are picking up the challenge and the opportunities with courage and commitment. But some were sceptical about the practicality, fairness or impact of future environmental payments.

In a series of polls and focus groups, we asked farmers what it would take to help them, and the industry as a whole, to transition sustainably. Their priorities were:

- A predictable policy environment – a clear and reliable framework to unlock investment and allow strategic planning
- Relevant innovation – public research investment that matches what farmers need
- Peer-to-peer support – technical, business and social support go hand-in-hand in a sector under pressure
- Fair prices and stable markets – a decent income from their produce so farmers can save, plan and reinvest
- Access to innovative finance – farmers are being asked to adapt to an uncertain future, and need investors and lenders ready to share the risk

Changing farming systems is a serious and long-term task. We propose a transition plan for agriculture that applies ecological principles to food and farming systems, optimising interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment, as well as with the social components of a fair and sustainable food system – a fourth agricultural revolution.

Far from being a revolution that leaves victims in its wake, we want to place farmers in the driving seat to design and lead the change. Working together with industry, stakeholders and government, a transition plan to 2030 must be backed by fair investment, and function from farm scale through landscape scale to national scale.

We recommend:

1. Designing and implementing a ten-year transition plan for sustainable, agroecological farming by 2030
2. Backing innovation by farmers to unleash a fourth agricultural revolution
3. Making sure every farmer can get trusted, independent advice by training a cadre of peer mentors and farmer support networks
4. Boosting cooperation and collaboration by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors
5. Establishing a National Agroecology Development Bank to accelerate a fair and sustainable transition

A countryside that works for all, and rural communities are a powerhouse for a fair and green economy

How do we best manage all our land for farming, for nature, for climate adaption, for habitat restoration, for housing, infrastructure, energy and industry? This isn't about a new spatial plan; it is about taking a farsighted, whole systems and systematic view.

Whilst around one percent of people are employed in agriculture, around 72 percent of UK land is farmed. People are part of the landscape; they shape it and are shaped by it. The beauty of the countryside contributes to the local and national identities of rural and urban people alike. Access to the countryside and to the natural world is crucial to wellbeing. This requires flourishing rural economies to sustain vibrant, living, working communities.

It is also in and on the land that new work is needed to respond to the well-rehearsed global challenges. The world of work is changing fast. Amidst the talk of disruptive technologies and their impact on careers, we also need to ask, what is the work needed right now to recover fragile natural and human systems and who will do it? The fierce sense of urgency to tackle the climate emergency is well expressed amongst young people, who will be hurt most directly by degraded ecosystems.

We recommend:

1. Establishing a national land use framework in England that inspires cooperation based on the public value of land, mediating and encouraging multipurpose uses
2. Investing in the skills and rural infrastructure to underpin the rural economy
3. Creating more good work in the regenerative economy
4. Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need
5. Establishing a National Nature Service that employs the energy of young people to kickstart the regenerative economy

A framework for change

Radically shifting the whole system is likely to combine incremental, transformational and disruptive change. We need leaders who can hold together broad coalitions of interests, unified around a connecting mission, to imagine a better version of our shared future, and to translate shared intention into collective action.

A radical mission must be underpinned by practical actions. And as we have found throughout our inquiry, people are already doing things to bring a more regenerative future to life. Around the UK, farmers and growers, businesses and communities are bringing their ingenuity to work, to craft creative solutions to the problems they are dealing with day in and day out. Our companion document to the report, Field Guide for the Future, shares their stories, experiences and learning.

Our relationship with the EU and our subsequent trade arrangements are still to be determined. It is vital that the government reflects UK standards in trade deals and champions the multilateral approaches best placed to achieve a consistent approach worldwide. Meanwhile, government already has some useful tools at its disposal to act now. One is the Public Value Framework and we set out how we think this can be imaginatively and practically extended to provide for stronger cross-departmental actions across government, local and regional bodies.

The Natural Capital Committee and others have moved the dial in debates about how public money should be spent for public benefits. The three underpinning principles are compelling. And we think we can go further.



Public money
for public
goods



all the resources
aligned for public
value



Polluter pays
principle



not just the
environment but
also health and
wellbeing



Net
environmental
gain



AND fair net social
gain

We also need new economic measures. Perverse incentives in one part of the system can drive actions which create unforeseen consequences elsewhere, with huge costs to the public purse, people and planet. Businesses require the right enabling environment to change, with meaningful incentives to enrich public value. To back these up, we call for a strong and escalating regulatory baseline, so that business activities which deplete public value are curtailed. We must make it easy for people to do the right thing and increasingly difficult (or expensive) to do the wrong things.

But we also know that the change required is momentous. Some of our recommendations are straightforward, aligning with others; some require much more deliberation, so that citizens, businesses and communities can work through the complex choices and implications. Our report sets out actions for everyone. In taking this whole systems approach, our responses are both radical and practical, engaging all those who need to act, to do so together.

Next steps

The Commission will continue to work with partners until the end of October 2019 to help progress and implement our recommendations.



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Executive summary

In signing up to the historic Paris climate change agreement, the UK has accepted that it must enshrine in law a goal of reducing its carbon emissions to zero. The UK is also legally committed by its own 2008 Climate Change Act to delivering an 80% cut in emissions by 2050. Yet, even based on emissions within its borders, not counting those associated with imports, the UK is not on track to meet this target, let alone reach zero carbon. There is an urgent need to increase ambition on delivery.

CAT's previous Zero Carbon Britain (ZCB) reports, plus a range of other work, clearly demonstrate that we have all the technologies needed to reach net zero carbon. Rather than an unresolved technical challenge, it is increasingly accepted that we must overcome a mix of political, cultural and psychological barriers. This report investigates how we can overcome them, linking up insights from research with examples and stories from individuals and organisations that are living the changes we need to see.

This report doesn't claim to provide all the answers – there is a clear need for more detailed and better resourced work, further linking research and practice across disciplines, borders, sectors and scales.

Where we are now

Understanding where we are today is a vital step in exploring what needs to change, and how that can be brought about.

The situation today is a long way from where we need to be.

Most of the UK's electricity is generated from fossil fuels and the UK is not on track to meet its target of generating 15% energy from renewables by 2020. The energy system is highly centralised and dominated by a small number of large companies, while community energy schemes supply less than 1% of electricity.

Most people in the UK are eating too much animal protein and processed foods and not enough fruit and vegetables. Obesity levels are on the rise and a huge amount of food is being wasted.

There is growing car dependency, through choice or necessity, while public transport services are being cut back. Electric vehicles are still a small percentage of the overall fleet. There has been a dramatic growth in air travel, due to a relatively small proportion of richer frequent flyers.

The UK has an ageing and poorly insulated building stock, with over 2 million households in fuel poverty.

Inequality in the impacts of climate change

Climate change affects everyone, but some people suffer more than others. It reinforces and exacerbates existing patterns of inequality, particularly in developing countries. In the UK, worsening storms, flooding and heatwaves particularly impact disabled people, children and older people, as well as deprived communities. The UK contributes to global climate change impacts through its domestic emissions plus those associated with imported goods and its high carbon investments overseas.

What needs to change?

There needs to be a significant increase in installed renewable capacity for electricity and heat. We must increase the amount of plant-based food and reduce the amount of meat, especially beef and lamb, as well as dairy in our diets. We must significantly reduce the need to drive or fly by improving public transport, increasing levels of walking and cycling, and providing disincentives to drive or fly. All vehicles need to be run on 100% renewable energy.

New houses need to be built to zero-carbon standard and use low-carbon materials for construction, while existing buildings need to be retrofitted to significantly reduce energy demand. All of these changes can result in significant social, economic and environmental benefits.

The barriers to change

Exploring the wider barriers helps us grasp the multifaceted nature of this challenge.

Worldviews and values: Climate change is not the root problem but a symptom of our materialistic culture and growing disconnection from nature and from each other. The belief that we are separate from, or even somehow ‘above’ nature, allows continued inaction, even when there is clear evidence that our actions are deeply damaging the habitats of other humans and other species. Our values have a profound effect on our behaviour. As long as values based on image, wealth and status appear to dominate society, people will struggle to act on more helpful values, such as honesty, social justice and equality.

Communications: The prevailing silence on climate change across the media and in public dialogues undermines levels of public awareness and action. There is significant media bias, with views of marginal climate sceptics given inappropriate prominence. There is also undue stress on the uncertainty of climate science, driven through well-funded campaigns by industry. Corporate or political affiliations can lead to media bias, often because of dependence on advertising revenue. Highly concentrated media ownership gives a few individuals a disproportionate influence on public opinion. Commercial advertising

promotes values that are counter to concern and action on climate. People are often unaware of the subliminal effects of advertising, and children – often targeted by advertisers – are especially vulnerable.

Psychology and behaviour: There are numerous psychological barriers preventing people thinking about or acting on climate change, even when they have high levels of concern about the issue. Many people fail to take responsibility because of feelings of powerlessness or scepticism about the efficacy of individual action. In some cases there may be a lack of knowledge or information about what to do. People are heavily influenced by others and observed social norms, so will be reluctant to act if no one else does.

There may also be a lack of urgency because climate change is not seen as a personal threat or because it's not recognised as a moral wrong. Many of the behaviours that need to change are also habitual behaviours that are hard to change. There has been undue focus on uncontroversial individual behaviour change and not enough emphasis on more radical action and tackling barriers at social, industrial and governmental levels.

Carbon lock-in: Industrialised economies have become dependent on fossil fuel systems over many years, developing significant system inertia that is hugely resistant to change. While innovation at the local level can break through this inertia, many local

projects face difficulties in scaling up or spreading ideas into the mainstream. Small groups often lack the necessary financial resources, time or skills, making them vulnerable to external shocks and problems of fatigue and burnout.

In many cases there are practical barriers that make alternatives less convenient or attractive, such as the hassle factor of building retrofits. Local councils are responsible for local policy and delivery of planning, housing, transport and waste but have seen budget cuts that undermine action in these key areas. The planning system has been constantly devalued and local planning powers removed.

Economics and finance: The continued belief in the ideology of neo-liberalism, deregulation and free markets undermines society's ability to deal with climate change. The systematic privatisation and contraction of the public sphere favours returns to shareholders over environmental responsibilities, and means the necessary funds are not available for investment in the zero carbon transition. There is an urgent need for a level playing field for low or zero carbon alternatives. Fossil fuels receive billions of pounds in subsidies, far higher than those given to renewables, and the full external costs of fossil fuels are not included in the price, making them appear cheaper.

Higher upfront costs of super-efficient buildings or electric vehicles also impede uptake despite lower

whole-life costs than conventional alternatives. The government has an interest in supporting national fossil fuel production due to the contribution of revenues to government budgets. There is an investment gap for renewables, with traditional methods of financing tending to favour large centralised projects.

There is a pervasive but mistaken assumption in society that perpetual growth within our finite ecosystem is synonymous with improved well-being and is sustainable and desirable. Also the problems with using GDP as a measure of progress and quality of life have long been recognised by economists and others.

Politics and governance: Changing systems like energy or food is a political power struggle with risks including confronting powerful vested interests and implementing policies perceived as unpopular. Just 90 private and state owned companies are responsible for nearly two-thirds of historical cumulative emissions of carbon dioxide. Fossil fuel and other high carbon industries successfully lobby governments to weaken climate legislation and policy, a phenomenon known as regulatory capture. Current lobbying laws fail to meet international principles on transparency and weaken checks on corporate influence.

There is also a problem of ‘revolving doors’ where politicians and civil servants move backwards and forwards to and from industry. Lack of collective political will for action is a fundamental

obstacle, with both commitment and cross-party unity on climate change diminished over recent years. Public spending cuts have undermined green investments, while fossil fuel tax breaks have increased.

Even when politicians are aware that climate change is urgent and important they may still fail to act because of factors including; undue faith in future technical solutions, education in neoclassical economics, ‘tendency for group think’ and a need to avoid blame. In recent years the government has shifted away from legislation towards self-regulation and voluntary approaches, and has withdrawn or repealed key laws and policy, such as the legislation for zero carbon homes.

Many of the remaining policies have shortcomings. The Climate Change Act has loopholes that prevent emissions from the power sector being included in carbon budgets, and there is a lack of accountability for meeting its targets. It is also difficult for citizens and NGOs to bring legal cases against polluting firms. The changes proposed to Judicial Review, an important check and balance on government action, will make it extremely difficult for charities to seek this legal remedy.

Making it happen

Based on our assessment of the barriers, we offer a synthesis overview of the broad range of current research and practice demonstrating how these can be overcome. There is no single approach that guarantees success,

but a combination of interventions in different ways can leverage change.

Worldviews and values: The importance of feeling connected to nature is a long recognised way of fostering pro-ecological behaviour. Helping people understand that their well-being is interlinked with the protection of the natural world has been shown to foster more sustainable behaviour as well as leading to higher levels of health and well-being. Promoting more compassionate values is important, so that these values become strengthened across society.

Reducing the focus on consumption needs to be recognised as a positive shift that increases well-being. Measures that can help this include reducing the working week as a way to break the cycle of working to spend, and promotion of the sharing economy, which enables products and services to be given or exchanged. On the production side, the circular economy designs out waste in a closed loop system.

The main global religions now show increasing unity around climate change, with many promoting less materialistic lifestyles and engaging on climate both practically and politically. Outside of organised religion, many people now seek spiritual experience that provides meaning in their lives. Some practices, such as meditation and mindfulness, have been shown to foster greater compassion for others and more sustainable behaviour. Spiritual practice is also being successfully combined with both social and political change.

The arts have long been a powerful catalyst in transforming worldviews and sparking cultural change, allowing imaginations to flourish, glimpsing other ways of seeing and feeling. It is from these experiences that different futures can emerge. The arts have the ability to engage people collectively and to challenge the status quo.

Communication: The current concentration of UK media ownership needs to be addressed through regulation with clear thresholds in law. This requires a wide public campaign to build the necessary political support. While media misinformation sticks and is often hard to correct, it can and should be challenged head-on by climate scientists and activists. With limited resources the climate movement can use clever and engaging online communications to counter misinformation and greenwash.

Given the pervasive and detrimental nature of advertising there is a clear need to better regulate the industry, banning advertising in public spaces and restricting advertising to children. Many other countries have introduced such restrictions, and it is likely that there would be public support for this in the UK. The creative power of the marketing industry can also be harnessed in ways that support the zero carbon transition.

The prevailing climate silence can be broken using stories that are more engaging and memorable than information alone, backed by positive images that can have a strong

mobilising effect. Communication that highlights the positive benefits of mitigation is more effective in promoting action than fear driven appeals. The use of low-cost accessible social media can enable rapid communication with a global audience and can be used to mobilise large numbers of people very quickly, as well as driving news traffic.

Psychology and behaviour change:

Positive stories of what can be practically achieved can help counter feelings of helplessness, demonstrate that other people care, and show that the actions of both individuals and communities do make a difference. The influence of social norms related to how others behave and what people believe others expect of them can be harnessed to encourage more sustainable behaviour. High profile individuals can also help normalise new behaviours.

The lack of urgency on climate change can be addressed by making the issue more immediate, for example, by emphasising the impacts of severe weather. Care is needed, however, to avoid overwhelming people or inducing guilt. Engagement can also be increased by framing climate change as a moral wrong that needs to be put right, and linking action to positive emotions, such as hope, pride and gratitude.

Behavioural change can be more closely linked to the wider structural changes needed in society, industry and government. Better programme design and targeting can improve outcomes and can be used to influence

social action and tackle more damaging behaviours. The challenge of breaking ingrained habitual behaviour can be addressed during transition periods, such as moving house or changing jobs, when habits are disrupted and people are more open to change.

Carbon lock-in: Thousands of community groups across the UK are developing practical, positive examples of the zero carbon transition, ranging from waste food cafés to community energy schemes. While many of these community-scale projects are small, they empower and connect people, help expand the political choices available, give people a sense of agency and help normalise sustainable behaviours. The role of intermediary organisations that connect and support grassroots projects is very important in helping to scale up and replicate ideas. Government support is needed for community action on carbon in the form of a long-term strategy and the provision of necessary resources.

Making zero carbon alternatives more convenient and attractive is essential. For example, by making walking and cycling safer with the provision of off-road, segregated paths and reduced traffic speeds, or combining energy works with general home repairs, maintenance and improvements.

Rethinking planning can help reduce car dependency through measures, such as an increase in car-free developments, higher minimum densities for housing and tighter parking provision. There

is also a need to restore the rights of councils to set higher energy standards for local developments.

Local authorities play a key role in reaching carbon targets. Despite funding pressures, many UK authorities have developed innovative low carbon solutions, and councils can make significant savings from energy efficiency and earn revenue from renewable energy schemes. Cities are in an ideal position to catalyse wider climate action, with higher urban densities enabling innovative approaches. Several world cities plan to be carbon neutral within the next ten years.

Economics and finance: Moving on from the prevailing and demonstrably failed economic model of neo-liberalism with its emphasis on free markets can facilitate a more co-operative, fair, enriching, resilient and sustainable economic system. Backed by a shift from a narrow focus on economic growth and GDP, this could transform how society sets out its goals and evaluates progress towards them.

Removing the massive subsidies currently given to fossil fuels and making all energy choices pay their full societal or environmental costs will help level the playing field for zero carbon alternatives. This could manifest in the form of a carbon tax for fossil fuels, congestion charging, workplace parking schemes, taxes on unhealthy foods and a levy on frequent flyers.

Local and municipal banks and

citizen finance can assist in providing investment for zero carbon measures, such as renewable energy generation, retrofitting buildings and sustainable transport infrastructure and services. Low and zero interest ‘pay as you save’ loans could be provided for energy efficiency measures using successful examples from around the world to remodel the failed Green Deal.

New business and ownership models can prioritise environmental and social benefits as much as economic returns; these include energy co-operatives, social enterprises, new energy supply models, municipally owned companies, community and public ownership.

There is enormous scope for more community and public ownership, particularly in energy supply and distribution. This can be achieved by strengthening policies that encourage community energy projects and through new legislation.

Taking assets like the railways or national grid back into public ownership could ensure that the necessary improvements take place and profits are reinvested for the public good rather than being distributed to shareholders.

Politics and governance: Political action requires increasing the visibility of climate change amongst voters, whilst providing clear evidence that workable solutions already exist gives politicians no place to hide. Powerful vested interests and their undue influence on the regulatory process can be challenged through shareholder action and divestment campaigns, as well as

by increased transparency. The current law on transparency of lobbying can be amended to satisfy international principles of transparency. Rules to prevent the problem of ‘revolving doors’ must be tightened.

Mass social movements based on coalitions of a broad range of groups will be needed to drive political support as individual issue groups are not strong enough on their own. Forging a sense of collective identity and finding common values is vital. While traditional insider advocacy approaches are valuable, disruptive forms of protest are also needed. Throughout history radical voices have challenged and helped overturn systems of injustice and helped shift the window of political possibility.

Cross-party political support for both policy and action can be built by framing communications appropriately and by the use of trusted communicators. Submissions to Parliamentary Select Committees or direct communication with MPs and local councillors help build support. Political risk can also be reduced by directly linking climate policies with complementary policies, such as health.

New and strengthened legislation and policy frameworks are needed. Despite government preference for deregulation or self-regulation, most voluntary approaches have performed poorly. The Climate Change Act must be amended to deliver the net zero emissions target and to close existing loopholes that exclude emissions from the power sector.

There also needs to be a better system of accountability at all levels. New laws can protect the planet and future generations, such as an international law on ecocide. In Wales, a groundbreaking new law requires public bodies to consider the well-being of future generations in decision-making. Legal access for NGOs and citizens to challenge public policy also needs to be improved.

Conclusions

Getting to zero carbon will require radical system change. All the necessary technologies already exist, improvements are appearing all the time and costs are falling. However, our hesitation to believe that this transition is possible is, in itself, one of the key barriers to achieving that shift.

History shows that radical social and technological changes are possible, and can happen within a few years. This transition should not be seen as burdensome or a return to the past, but as one of the most exciting opportunities in human history. Isolated, stressful, consumer-focused lifestyles can be replaced by a sense of connection with community and nature, delivering benefits in physical health and psychological well-being.

The overarching headline is that we need to do this together. It will take many of us pulling in the same direction to enable change, and each and every one of our actions can contribute to making a zero carbon future happen.

Chapter 2:

Postcards from the future

Being able to envisage positive change is a powerful first step in making it happen. Drawn from CAT's Zero Carbon Britain research, these 'postcards' help us visualise what a zero carbon future could look like. Looking back from a future where we have risen to the climate challenge, they explore what changes have occurred in the four key sectors of food, transport, buildings and energy.



2.1 Food

The average diet in the UK is now healthier, more varied and sustainable owing to a mixture of legislation and education. The trend in obesity has been reversed and is no longer a health concern now that the consumption of foods high in fats, salt and sugar has fallen.

Restrictions on advertising, as well as the taxation of junk foods, have helped move the population as a whole to a much more balanced diet. There is a greater understanding of healthy

food choices and the benefits of more nutrient-dense foods. This vastly increased awareness of what actually constitutes a diet healthy for both people and planet means people eat significantly less red meat – particularly beef and lamb, but also pork and chicken, and less cheese, milk and eggs. Many people enjoy high quality meat a couple of times a week, and while most still eat a certain amount of dairy produce, plant-based alternatives are everyday fare.

Publicly-funded organisations like schools and hospitals always provide sustainable diets. Restaurants and manufacturers have diversified significantly and the majority of meals on their menus are now non-meat or lower meat choices. Many popular dishes, such as spaghetti Bolognese, are now made by adding a small amount of meat to a plant-based mince. Nobody seems to have noticed the difference.

Farmers grow a wider range of crops, providing more food directly for human consumption, rather than for livestock. The UK grows much more of its own fruit and vegetables. Animal welfare and meat quality is also improved. Pigs and chickens are fed predominantly on food waste, with a small amount of crops still grown to feed livestock, to limit the need for these to be imported from elsewhere. The reduction in livestock farming has reduced water pollution and enabled better protection of the UK's green spaces and land around streams and rivers, helping wildlife and biodiversity.



2.2 Transport

Towns and cities have become more human-centred and vibrant, with attractive public spaces where people can meet, stroll and shop in traffic-free streets. Cars no longer dominate and vast areas of the land that were once used for car parking have been made into green areas, or converted to low-cost and social housing.

Public transport is now quicker, more affordable and more convenient than travelling by car. Combined with safer and more pleasant options for cycling and walking, these have become the norm for all sorts of journeys, including to work and to the shops.

All cars, light vans and buses are electric or hydrogen-fuelled, meaning they're not only cleaner but quieter too. This has been helped by the reduction of traffic speeds in urban areas to 20mph, making residential areas much safer and enabling children to play outdoors in their streets.

In addition to being less stressed by their commute, people use technology to work more flexibly, all of which make for a more productive working day. The school run is a thing of the past as children walk, cycle or catch the bus.

The efficient public transport infrastructure extends to rural areas, where regular bus services connect with rail networks.

Holidaying in the UK is popular again, regenerating the economies of many British seaside resorts and rural areas. Although some people still take occasional flights for family holidays, health or religious reasons, travelling by high-speed train to continental Europe is favoured by many. Rather like the slow food movement, slow travel for leisure has become popular – with the focus as much on the journey as the destination.

People, especially children, are much healthier and less stressed as a result of the cleaner air and from walking and cycling more. This, together with better diets, has averted an obesity epidemic in the UK, saving money on healthcare and increasing overall levels of well-being.



2.3 Buildings

While many of the UK's buildings look the same, their performance has dramatically improved thanks to comprehensive energy efficiency retrofitting. This has come about through a mixture of minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings, incentive schemes managed by local authorities to ensure secure financial returns, and the provision of low-cost finance.

Building regulations require all new buildings to be built to 'Passive House or equivalent' standards, giving everyone – whether they're home-owners or in the social and rented sectors – homes that are warmer and cheaper to run.

Methods and technologies for achieving these super-high efficiency standards have spread throughout the construction industry. With their wider implementation, costs have reduced significantly and further innovations have been developed. The adjustment in land values to cover increased construction costs has been minimal and many wonder why we didn't do it sooner!

Zero carbon heating systems, such as heat pumps and solar thermal systems, have become commonplace and people are more aware of their energy use and much better at controlling it using smart-meters and energy control systems. There is also a much increased range of 'flexible demands', such as freezer and heat pumps, which can pay the best possible price by automatically selecting to operate at the time when the grid tells them energy from renewables is available.

The materials used in building new buildings and in retrofitting existing ones have changed. Knowledge and information about the embodied energy and carbon of construction materials, as well as the health and well-being benefits of 'natural materials', have become widely available and well understood. At long last, as a nation, our housing stock has caught up with that of our European neighbours.



2.4 Energy

The UK now gets all its energy from renewable sources, from solar panels on roofs and walls, wind turbines on the tops of hills and out at sea, from plantations and energy crops, and agricultural and food waste.

A significant and important percentage of renewables are installed, owned and managed by communities, boosting

and stabilising local economies and helping public acceptance. Offshore wind is part-owned privately and part-owned by the public purse, using public sector pension funds. This growth in the renewable energy industry has also created hundreds of thousands of good jobs across the country.

Local authorities return to getting a significant part of their funding from delivering local energy provision, this time sustainably. There is still a national grid, developed to enable a greater proportion of the energy that feeds into it to come from decentralised and community owned sources – for which there is widespread public and political support.

The carbon dividend, an equal per-person refund of revenue raised by a carbon tax, means that although the unit cost of energy has increased, household energy bills are lower as a result of much improved insulation and efficiency. People are still better off than they were, and certainly in a better position than they would have been if dangerous had not been averted.

The renewable energy industry in the UK has also grown strongly, and many see the benefits of the energy transition, particularly the creation of hundreds of thousands of good jobs across the country.

The human and monetary cost of illnesses caused by air pollution has fallen significantly.



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
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8 th October 2019

<u>Item</u>

7

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT FOR THE AONB

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
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Summary

This paper proposes a planning policy Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Shropshire Hills AONB.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the proposal and rationale.

Background

Local authorities are required to give special consideration to AONBs, and doing so in a DPD specifically for the AONB area has the potential to reduce conflict and the large workload associated with for example contentious site allocations and major planning casework. A DPD for the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB has recently been adopted by Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland Council, and this is being seen as an example of best practice for planning policy in AONBs.

Why produce a Shropshire Hills AONB DPD?

- **To provide better protection for the AONB landscape from major developments.**

Controversial major developments have included major housing schemes, large multiple agricultural buildings and industrial scale renewable energy installations. Shropshire Council's poor past record on protecting the AONB from major development has been highlighted in a national report. The Glover Review is recommending strengthening of the duty of local authorities with regard to AONBs. The AONB landscape is increasingly being understood and valued as an asset to the economy which can be undermined by inappropriate development. A DPD led by capacity of the landscape rather than the 'need' for development would firm up a new approach which regards the AONB positively rather than as a constraint. The document can also be positive about the kinds of development which actively support the AONB purposes of conserving and enhancing the landscape.

- **To strengthen the policy approach within the AONB on key areas of development:**

- Housing – A DPD provides the opportunity for an approach to housing in the AONB which is led by capacity of the landscape, local need and community wishes. There is

potential to justify a higher proportion of affordable housing within developments, and at lower size thresholds of development (the Arnside & Silverdale DPD has a policy of 50% affordable for all developments of two or more houses).

- Agricultural development – New agricultural policy and developing schemes are pushing towards more support for environmental and public benefits. This positive shift for land management should not be undermined by agricultural developments which fall in the scope of planning. Farm businesses need to be able to develop, but in harmony with the landscape and with other sectors such as the visitor economy.
 - Renewable energy – With the Climate Emergency and Zero Carbon targets the need for renewable energy is greater than ever, and ways to accommodate this sensitively in the AONB landscape at appropriate scales are needed to avoid conflict.
 - Tourism – Valuing the landscape more for visitors and a rise in staycations are already increasing numbers and will continue to do so. Tourism developments also need not to devalue the landscape resource on which they depend.
- **To improve the quality of smaller developments (e.g. in design terms), which cumulatively affect the quality and character of the AONB.**

Landscape Guidance is being prepared at present and the need for better design guidance has been identified. These could be incorporated into or linked with the DPD.

List of Background Papers

Arnside & Silverdale AONB DPD at <https://www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk/aonb-development-plan-document-dpd-adopted/> and case study for NAAONB, available on request.

National Trust 2015 report 'AONBs and Development'

<https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/documents/national-trust-areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-and-development.pdf>

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

None



Committee and Date

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

8 th October 2019

Item

8

IRONBRIDGE POWER STATION SITE REDEVELOPMENT – UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
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Summary

This paper provides an opportunity for a brief discussion on the Ironbridge Power Station redevelopment proposal.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the issue.

Background

The AONB Partnership on 9th September submitted a response to Shropshire Council's Strategic Sites consultation (see Appendix 1), following some direct discussions at a senior level with the Council.

List of Background Papers

Harworth Group proposals at https://ironbridgeregeneration.co.uk/ .

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
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Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
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Community / Consultations Appraisal
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The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.
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Appendices

Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership response to Shropshire Council Strategic Sites consultation, 9 th Sept 2019

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership response to Strategic Sites consultation, 9th Sept 2019

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Strategic Sites consultation document. The AONB Partnership is a formal Joint Advisory Committee to Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council regarding the statutory AONB designation and its purposes, and our response relates to this role, and does not therefore cover all aspects of the consultation.

In addition to relevant sections of the NPPF and various Shropshire planning policies, the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan is a statutory document formally approved by both Councils to set out their '*policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it*' (Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, s89).

Q6. Do you agree with the identification of the Former Ironbridge Power Station as a preferred strategic site?

The former Ironbridge Power station site is wholly outside the AONB but lies immediately adjacent to it. We have no objection overall to the allocation of the former power station site for some redevelopment, but we do have comments in relation to the designated AONB about how development may be done.

The AONB Management Plan 2019-24 approved by Shropshire Council states in the Wrekin Forest Local Area Section:

The redevelopment of the former Ironbridge Power Station close to the AONB near Buildwas will be a big factor over the coming years. This large site lies right between the AONB and the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, and the scale and design of development need to be appropriate and sensitive.

Policy P1 viii) of the Management Plan on setting of the AONB is relevant to this site:

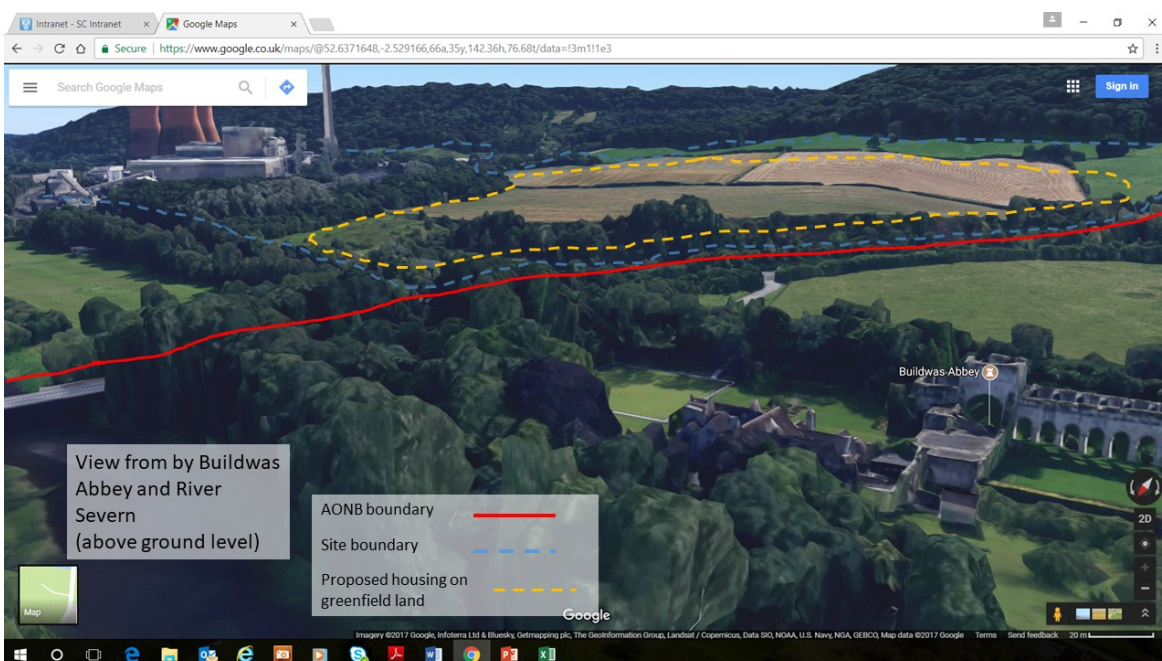
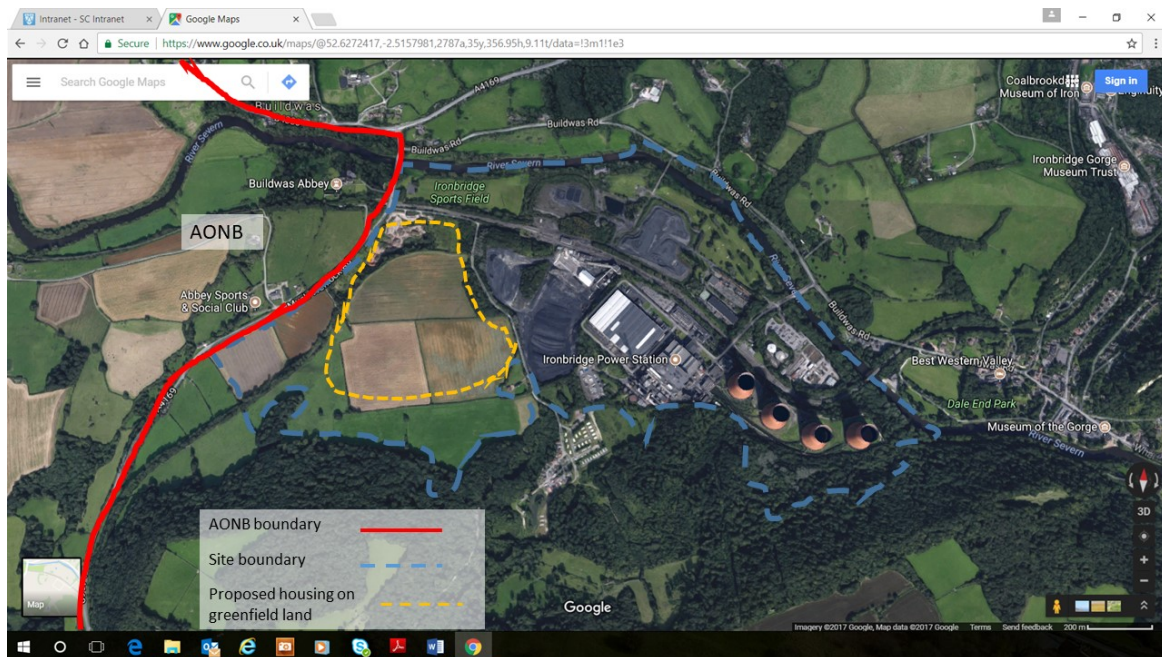
Setting of the AONB. Development in the area around the AONB should be assessed for its impacts on the special qualities of the AONB itself, and also take account of the special qualities and landscape quality of the setting of the AONB. Measures to consider and mitigate such impacts should include where required Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments; care over orientation, site layout, height and scale of structures and buildings; consideration of the landscape, land uses and heritage assets around and beyond the development site; careful use of colours, materials and non-reflective surfaces; restraint and care in the use of lighting.

[This policy links with current Shropshire Council Core Strategy policies CS5 Countryside and Green Belt, CS17 Environmental Networks and SAMDev Policy MD12 Natural Environment].

Q7. Do you have any comments on the proposed site guidelines for the Former Ironbridge Power Station?

The guidelines and the consultation document overall do not mention the Shropshire Hills AONB, and it is not apparent that potential impacts on the AONB have been considered in the proposed allocation of this strategic site (including landscape and visual impacts but also other aspects of the AONB's special qualities).

The Partnership's main concern is that the western part of the site, abutting the AONB, is greenfield agricultural land. Building here is not therefore redevelopment, and would be a significant change to the character of this area of countryside, which would presumably not be considered if it did not happen to be within the same ownership parcel as the main power station site. This is shown in the images below (yellow dashed area):





View from the Wrekin summit with greenfield land shown in the masterplan for housing development shown in dashed yellow line.

While it is clear that development is not proposed to extend to the furthest boundaries of the ownership, the greenfield area indicated on the masterplan for housing is still extensive. At its north-west corner it comes right up to the AONB boundary and to about 200m from the important heritage asset of Buildwas Abbey. The land slopes to the north, and the uphill southern two fields are visually prominent (as shown above) in views from The Wrekin summit, one of the most visited countryside locations in the AONB and the county. The western part of these fields includes land which starts to slope to the west away from the power station site, so development here would not link visually with main part of the site and would have the impression of spilling over into the valley leading south to Farley occupied by the A4169.

To reduce these impacts on the AONB and important locations and features within it, we believe the extent of development on the greenfield land needs to be reduced, and its layout and landscaping carefully considered with these considerations in mind.

We note also that the scale of housing development in this part of the site will have a significant influence on the scale of off-site impacts of the development, especially from increased traffic. This will affect places beyond the AONB but also includes impacts on the AONB itself, especially from increased traffic on the A4169 towards Much Wenlock and the B4380 towards Shrewsbury. There will also be a knock-on impact of increased recreational pressure on the Wrekin nearby. These considerations do not appear to feature in the site guidelines within the consultation document.

Q8. Do you have any comments on the indicative masterplan produced by The Harworth Group for the redevelopment of the Former Ironbridge Power Station?

On 19th June 2019, the AONB Partnership submitted the following comments to Harworth Group on the indicative masterplan:

Representatives of the Partnership have attended the two stakeholder events held and the Partnership discussed the Masterplan at its meeting on 11th June 2019. We note that this is a pre-application consultation and that only some plans with no written documents have been released for comment, and we therefore make only a fairly brief response and anticipate commenting more fully at later stages.

The power station site is of high sensitivity, abutting the AONB at the western edge and the World Heritage Site to the east. We are not opposed to the principle of redeveloping the site, in a sensitive manner. However, a large proportion of the proposed new housing is on greenfield agricultural land. While in the same ownership, we consider this element goes well beyond 'redevelopment' and sits uneasily under this title. The proposed development of this large area of currently undeveloped land also increases the overall scale of the new settlement and all associated issues, as well as being the area immediately adjacent to the AONB. This part of the site is prominent, sloping land on which development would be highly visible from significant distances and key viewpoints such as The Wrekin. It will also affect the setting of the important heritage site of Buildwas Abbey.

Due to the driver of maximising the number of houses built, the layout and design of the large development is not able to make the best use of opportunities from the rolling terrain, in which a smaller development could be relatively unobtrusive. More use should be made of open greenspace and retaining features of value (e.g. woodland and mature trees) to provide a landscape and biodiversity buffer to the AONB and provide recreational benefits for the new residents.

The secondary impacts from an increased population such as increase in traffic, impacts on tranquillity, change in character from upgrade of roads and new road access, increased recreational use, etc will be significant on existing local communities and will also affect the special qualities of the AONB. Account should be taken of the AONB Management Plan on these as well as landscape and visual matters. Design should minimise these impacts, and appropriate mitigation be put in place. The development should provide some investment in green infrastructure and heritage assets in the area affected.

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<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	<u>Item</u> 9
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8th October 2019

CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT - YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND FEASIBILITY FOR ONGOING LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY WITH THE PARTNERSHIP

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
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Summary

This paper sets out a process of youth engagement for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the proposal.

Background

As part of our Resilient Heritage project, we are exploring opportunities to embed youth involvement more widely in our work, hopefully in a lasting ongoing way. We have done some successful activity over recent years funding and delivering the John Muir Award and Young Rangers programmes. However we lack any real youth involvement in the AONB Partnership structure and much of our other work.

There are a number of current drivers and reasons why we now wish to address this:

- Lack of youth involvement was flagged up in an Equalities Assessment of the review of the Partnership's Terms of Reference earlier this year.
- Last September the Europarc Federation's Youth Manifesto was launched. This is about involving young people in conservation, and also addressing some of the challenges which young people in rural areas face, which affect the future of those areas. The themes are – Youth Empowerment, Living, Working, Learning, and a Call to Action. We belong to the Europarc Federation, which is the umbrella for the Young Rangers scheme.
- We are seeking to respond actively to the climate and environment emergency (including loss of nature and functioning ecosystems) since these are longstanding top priority issues for us and we know concern about this is high among young people.
- We are developing a Youth project which will hopefully provide new opportunities for involvement of young people. Some 'leadership' opportunities linked to our structure and mainstream work would complement other practical activities through the project.

We are letting a small contract to South Shropshire Youth Forum to explore through a consultation process with young people what form of youth involvement or representation we can create. One idea is some form of youth council or group linked to the AONB Partnership in which young people can come together with each other and progress their own ideas connected with our remit. We could at stages then bring this together with the

Partnership, our staff team and other groups. A potential pool of young people to engage with this may be past participants from the John Muir Award and/or Young Rangers programmes in the Shropshire Hills – many of these have heard of the AONB and will have positive experiences associated with it.

How any activity can be sustained in the future will be a key consideration for what we choose to do, so we are also seeking advice also on feasibility and resource implications for future support, etc. The consultation will mainly consist of an event involving some AONB Partnership members in a process described as ‘political speed dating’, where young people and Partnership members would rotate around having discussions on particular topics. Expressions of interest from Partnership members to be involved in this would be welcomed.

“In a society increasingly driven by technology and geared towards rapid progress, Protected Areas offer a particularly valuable balance for young people (and the rest of us) to slow down, discover, think and become actively involved in nature. In return, our Protected Areas can benefit greatly from their creative energy, unconventional thinking and understanding of the younger generation’s needs.

EUROPARC recently launched the Youth Manifesto: A call for change in our Protected Areas and rural communities from youth representatives of Europe. They make it clear; they want to be part of our collective parks and our collective future. They made a demand not just asking that something be done FOR youth in rural and Protected Areas but that something be done WITH them. Beyond consultation, to co-design a sustainable future. The imperative is now on parks and administrations, communities, decision and policy makers to rise to that challenge.”

Carol Ritchie, Director, Europarc Federation

List of Background Papers
Europarc Federation’s Youth Manifesto http://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/EUROPARC20Youth20Manifesto_web20version.pdf .
Human Rights Act Appraisal
The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environmental Appraisal
The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
Risk Management Appraisal
Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
Community / Consultations Appraisal
The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.
Appendices
None