



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 12 th July 2022	<u>Item</u> 4
--	-----------------------------

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOVER REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES - UPDATE

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

Summary

This paper provides members an update on government and NAAONB activity around implementation of the Landscapes Review.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the update.

Background

We are now in the crucial delivery phase of the Glover Review, which will determine whether a 'once in a generation' step change actually comes about, or whether this will be seen as the time when the opportunity was missed. There are some encouraging signs about the steps government is taking (e.g. in relation to strengthened legal powers and purposes, continuing to look at defining minimum standards for governance for local authorities, etc), but significant progress on resourcing appears to be the main sticking point.

All English AONBs have recently received a 3 year financial settlement from Defra which provides a 14.7% increase in core funding for 2022-23 (over the base budget for 2021-22, and equating for us to an additional £29k), but followed then by a flat line of the same cash amount for the following two years. While the current year increase is welcome, the following two year freeze at a time of rising costs means that our ability to expand the team in a meaningful way is very constrained. Overall this settlement falls well short of the transformative change for AONBs envisioned by the Glover Review Panel.

The Defra Landscapes team have indicated their will to do as much as possible on resourcing. In the short term additional funds are likely to come in the form of 'project' money – Farming in Protected Landscapes is an example of this, and there is currently under discussion a possible allocation among AONB and National Park bodies of some funding for work focused on 'Access for All'.

NAAONB has ongoing discussions with Defra regarding implementation of the Landscapes Review and we have periodically the opportunity to feed into this, either through NAAONB or sometimes directly through Defra workshops. Active topics include governance and the proposed National Landscapes rebrand. NAAONB continue to push that the various AONB

measures taken together could be transformative and each proposal should not be seen in isolation. The rebrand should happen if it is to mark a significant new stage for AONBs, but should not be done just as a superficial exercise.

For the statutory changes (such as updated powers and purposes), there is a need to find legislative space to do this. The possibility of clauses within the current Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill is currently being considered, and if this is not possible opportunities within a later Bill will be looked at.

List of Background Papers Landscapes review (National Parks and AONBs): government response: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response .
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