



## **PROPOSED STIPERSTONES SUPER NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

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### **Summary**

This paper provides background information on Natural England's proposal to establish a landscape scale National Nature Reserve in the Marches area close to the existing Stiperstones NNR. If progressed this would be managed by a partnership of landowning organisations who work together to improve their land for nature and wildlife. The proposal is still in early development, identifying potential partners and undertaking consultations. Andrew Nixon from Natural England has provided the information in this paper and at the meeting will give a short presentation and answer questions.

### **Recommendation**

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the information provided and offer perspectives on the proposal.

### **Background**

A large National Nature Reserve that is managed by multiple partners is sometimes referred to as a 'super' National Nature Reserve (sNNR). Super National Nature Reserves are a relatively new concept with only a few examples in the country. The first was the Purbeck Heaths sNNR which was declared in 2020 <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/purbeck-heaths-national-nature-reserve/>, and most recently the Mendip Hills was declared at the end of 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkmpv88Pg94>. There are a number of other examples around the UK including the Somerset Wetlands. Protected landscapes have played an instrumental role in the development of many sNNRs.

A sNNR is created through the declaration of new areas of land as National Nature Reserve (NNR) within a given locality. The land doesn't all have to be in one large contiguous block but parcels do need to be close to each other within the landscape and can be in multiple ownerships. The landowners then work together to manage this wider body of NNR land in a consistent way that it more beneficial to wildlife and people.

The land that is declared as National Nature Reserve is done so with the permission and consent of the landowners. There is no requirement or desire to include land that does not have the full support of the landowner. The landowners of the NNR would need to be prepared to manage their land for nature in the long term, ideally a minimum of 30 years,

and will need to become a Natural England 'approved body' if they are not already. Currently, potential landowning partners in the Stiperstones proposal include the National Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Forestry England, Shropshire County Council, Natural Resources Wales and Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust. All at this stage are interested in being part of the NNR but it is still early in the process and the landholdings will likely change through the confirmation process. Collectively this would significantly increase the area of NNR land in the Stiperstones landscape.

<b>List of Background Papers</b> None
<b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b> The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
<b>Environmental Appraisal</b> The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
<b>Risk Management Appraisal</b> Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
<b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b> A community consultation meeting was held on 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 at Snailbeach Village Hall.
<b>Appendices</b> Appendix 1 Proposed Stiperstones Super NNR Frequently Asked Questions Document



# Marches super National Nature Reserve

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What does 'super' National Nature Reserve mean?**

Natural England is proposing a plan to create a large National Nature Reserve in Shropshire. It will be managed by partner organisations who work together to improve the land for nature and wildlife. A large National Nature Reserve that is managed by partners is sometimes referred to as a 'super' National Nature Reserve.

### **Has this been done before?**

Yes, there are a few examples around the country. The first was the Purbeck Heaths in Dorset. Other examples include the Somerset Wetlands and the Mendip National Nature Reserve in Somerset.

### **What is the area it will cover?**

This depends on which landowners want to participate. Currently there are a number of partner organisations that could potentially include their land. Examples include Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire County Council, and the National Trust but this could change as we move through the process. The current Stiperstones NNR (National Nature Reserve) is 442 Hectares. If all partners come on board, we calculate it could be as much as 5000 Hectares and includes land over the border in Wales.

### **Why can't I see a map?**

Currently the area of land that will be included in the NNR is uncertain. It depends on which landowners choose to take part. As a result, the situation is always changing, and any map will quickly become out of date. As the process progresses, and we are more confident on what land might be included, we will be able to provide maps.

### **What are the advantages of a sNNR?**

It will raise the profile of nature conservation and provide a platform for landowners to work together to achieve largescale nature recovery, for example we can agree joint approaches, share ideas and resources etc. It may help in developing funding bids for large scale opportunities in the future

### **Will this limit what I can do on my land?**

Only if you choose to be a part of the NNR. Becoming part of the NNR is entirely voluntary. It requires commitment to manage the land primarily for nature conservation for 30 years, so if you decide to become part of the sNNR then you would need to be approved and commit to managing your land primarily for nature conservation.

### **Will there be an impact if my land adjoins the sNNR?**

You may see some changes on the land in the NNR if management practices are changed, however these will only be on land with-in the sNNR and there should not be any impacts on adjoining land. A National Nature Reserve declaration itself does not impose any constraints on surrounding land with regards to land use or development. It is possible this might not always be the case should there be any changes to national policy.



**Will access rights be affected on land included in the NNR?**

All statutory Public Rights of Way and open access land will remain unaffected by the changes. Declaring land as NNR does not bring any additional public access or restrictions and access to the land will continue to be at the discretion of the individual landowners.

**Will this mean more visitors to the area?**

if it goes ahead the sNNR may raise awareness of the area, although its profile is already high so we do not anticipate this to be significant. This may bring positive benefits for the local economy but could also create additional pressure on sensitive habitats and local facilities such as car parks. One of the benefits of the sNNR is that we can work together with others to ensure visits and recreational pressures is well managed.

**How is this being funded?**

Being an NNR does not bring direct additional funding, although being a partnership should increase the possibility of securing funding in the future from schemes such as Landscape Recovery. The partnership is dependent on partners giving some of their time voluntarily. Natural England will lead the process using a small amount of our staff time. One advantage of a sNNR is sharing resource and ideas across partners so overall we would hope this is a more efficient way of working.

**How can I find out more and keep up to date?**

Natural England will post information and updates on the Stiperstones Nature Reserve Facebook Page. If you want to more, you can contact the West Midlands Natural England Team on [west.midlands.enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:west.midlands.enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

**How long will it take?**

If the initiative proceeds Natural England are working towards a date in 2025.