

National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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BEGINS:

National Association for AONBs welcomes Landscapes Review's call to 'do more for nature and beauty'

For immediate release

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) welcomes the [initial findings](#) of the Designated Landscapes Review as outlined in the exchange of letters between Review Chair Julian Glover and the Secretary of State Michael Gove and we eagerly await the publication of the final report in the coming months.

NAAONB Chief Executive Howard Davies said: 'We welcome the interim findings of the Designated Landscapes Review and are glad to see that the findings have the support of the Secretary of State. AONB teams have the all energy, skills, ambition and strong partnerships needed to deliver, and we call on Westminster to provide us with the policy framework to enable us to do so.'

The interim findings state that '**more must be done for nature and beauty**'. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty teams are acutely aware of the need to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in their areas – indeed, AONB Partnerships jointly made a pledge – the [Colchester Declaration](#) – to do exactly this at their recent conference in Colchester. The Colchester Declaration sets specific out ambitious, stretching targets specifically designed to protect what remains and recover what has been lost in our natural environment.

The Review panel calls for Designated Landscapes to:

- **become leaders in the government's planned Nature Recovery Networks;**
- **take a lead in the national response to climate change;**
- **and develop landscape scale, long term strategies to assess and improve natural capital (ie the benefits provided by nature such as carbon capture and flood alleviation) in the areas they oversee.**

We believe that the AONB Partnerships' Colchester Declaration joins up all of these dots, taking an holistic approach to nature recovery.

AONB Partnerships are committing to:

- achieving net zero by 2050 by incorporating meaningful actions in AONB Management Plans in their next cycle (2024);

- embedding an ecosystems services approach – maximising the benefits that nature can provide through carbon sequestration and flood alleviation, and
- actively working to restore habitats and re-establish species on a landscape scale through strong connections with their local landowners. AONB teams have committed to creating a Species Action Plan for a species in their area in order to increase numbers such that at least 30 native species can be taken off the red list of endangered species by 2030. The Colchester Declaration commits AONB Partnerships to specific ambitious targets to be achieved by 2030:
 - at least 200,000 ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in AONBs will be in favourable condition
 - 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
 - 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

AONB Partnerships have a strong track record of delivering successful projects to restore nature: from Anglesey, where the Source to Sea project restored polluted waters to create habitats for fish and other wildlife; to Suffolk Coast and Heaths where the precious saltmarsh habitat for fish fry and birds has been restored; and valuable carbon capturing Peatland Restoration work has taken place across the country – in Cornwall, North Pennines and Forest of Bowland AONBs.

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 AONBs agrees that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of our delivery and we welcome the Panel’s call to action.

We are proud of how much has been achieved with very little: AONBs receive around 20p per person in the UK per year and one year’s funding for one of the English National Parks is greater than the annual funding for all 34 of England’s AONBs combined – but we would never advocate robbing Peter to pay Paul. We are very conscious of how much more there is to do and recognise the pivotal role AONBs and National Parks will play in jointly improving the health and wellbeing of the nation. We therefore strongly welcome the assertion that there is a clear case for increased funding for AONBs.

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty’s full response to the [interim findings](#) of the Review of Designated Landscapes can be found [here](#).

ENDS.

Notes to editors:

The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK’s 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other Protected Areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued. It does this by taking a collaborative and partnership based approach to working with our

membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see

Web: www.landscapesforlife.org.uk Twitter: @naaonb @AONBFamily

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and belong to an international Protected Landscape Family. There are 38 AONBs in England and Wales, and a further eight in Northern Ireland. For further information about the AONB Family visit www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

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