

National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
PRESS RELEASE: Friday, 14 January 2021

BEGINS: National Association for AONBs welcomes Government's response to Landscapes Review, but urges ambition

Embargoed until 0001 Saturday 15 January 2021

This morning (Saturday 15 January) the Government published its response to the [Landscapes Review](#), an independent review led by Julian Glover and published in 2019, and opened a consultation enabling the public to express their views.

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty welcomes the Government's long-awaited response, particularly the opportunity to reinvigorate the status of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with new purposes, powers and resources for the teams charged with conserving and enhancing these special places.

However, we believe the proposals as currently presented fall short of the ambitious, transformational change that Glover and his team envisaged. The Review recognised the enormous potential and frustrated ambition of the AONB network – 34 designated landscapes, covering 15% of England's land area – to deliver so much more for nature, climate and people, at this critical time.

The announcement in 2021 of plans to designate two new AONBs (Sandstone Ridge and Yorkshire Wolds) and extend two existing AONBs is a clear endorsement of the value of AONBs. Designation is a recognition of the national importance of these places, which are governed locally to reflect their unique combination of species, climate, geology and heritage.

Despite the chronic underfunding cited in the Landscapes Review, AONB teams are at the forefront of combatting climate change and restoring nature. Our joined-up approach to nature restoration is captured in the [Colchester Declaration](#). Extending the collaborative working ethos of AONBs to a national partnership could be effective, but only part of the answer.

John Watkins, Chief Executive of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty said:

“AONBs have a proven track record and a unique collaborative approach which helps to spread and scale best practice. Government funding for all 34 AONBs totals around £6m per year, roughly the same as a single medium sized secondary school. An uplift in core funding is essential to secure the financial future for England’s AONBs and an upscaling of their proven work. Extending the collaborative working ethos of AONBs to a national partnership could be effective, but only part of the answer.”

“The only limit on further delivery for nature, climate and people is AONB team capacity. We want Government to use this opportunity to work with us to strengthen AONBs as exemplars of twenty first century designated landscapes. Our response will put forward a clear road map for how Government could boost the impact of these areas for the good of the nation and nature.”

The UK government has set itself admirably stringent targets, with a strategy for net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and signing up to the United Nations leaders pledge to protect 30% of the country’s land and sea area for nature by 2030. Well looked after nature is accepted as the most effective and cheapest way to deliver on these targets – as a nation, we need to invest and cannot afford to allow these landscapes to fail.

Next steps

The Government’s response is accompanied by a 12-week consultation to seek views on the Government’s proposals, the National Association for AONBs will be submitting its views and we encourage members of the public to do the same.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks from today, closing on 9th April. This is an opportunity for people to shape how protected landscapes will deliver benefits for people and nature for years to come.

These are national landscapes, have your say, get involved.

Read the Government’s response:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response>

Respond to the consultation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-implementing-the-review>

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 AONBs, other. 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.

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