

MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

10 NOVEMBER 2023

AONB TERMS OF REFERENCE

Recommendation

1. The Committee is recommended to:
 - a) Note the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference.
 - b) Provide and discuss any comments; and
 - c) Accept the revised wording (as amended).

Background

2. Terms of Reference for the AONB Partnership sit alongside the JAC constitution and the Memorandum of Understanding on the AONB website [The AONB Partnership – Malvern Hills AONB](#) as part of a suite of governance documents. The Terms of Reference for the Partnership are now out of date and need to be reviewed.
3. Proposal 26 of the Landscapes Review [DEFRA - Landscapes Review - Final Report 2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) recommended that there should be reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society. Much of the content of proposal 26 applies to National Park Authorities but there are some suggestions for AONB Partnerships too, namely that 'boards' could be made smaller.

Summary

4. Thus far, proposal 26 of the Landscapes Review is yet to be acted on. In its [Landscapes review \(National Parks and AONBs\): government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (dated 15 January 2022) government stated:
5. *Natural England will replace the former Countryside Agency guidance for AONB Partnerships, to set out clear governance principles, processes, and structures that local authorities would be expected to follow. This guidance will be flexible enough to be adapted to local circumstances but would aim to improve consistency, performance, and transparency. To ensure a high level of uptake and incentivise positive reforms, we could include conditions in our grant agreements, requiring evidence that this guidance has been applied to local governance structures and processes.*

6. In light of the expected national guidance on this subject it is proposed that a very simple review and update of the Terms and Reference is approved by the Joint Advisory Committee at this time, in order to keep governance paperwork up to date. A more fundamental root and branch review may be required in due course. Proposed changes to the Terms of reference including dates and amendments that reflect working practices have been made to the document below. The more substantive changes relate to the planning protocol and the text provided in this section (Appendix 2 of the document) is new.

Specific Contact Points for this report

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