



# Agenda

## Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

**Friday, 8 November 2019, 10.00 am  
Council House, Malvern Hills District  
Council**

**Avenue Road  
Malvern  
WR14 3AF**

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## **Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee**

### **Friday, 8 November 2019, 10.00 am,**

#### **Members**

#### **Elected Members:**

Mrs G Rees (Chairman)	Malvern Hills Conservators
Dr K A Pollock (Vice Chairman)	Worcestershire County Council
Mr S Bosley	Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
Mr J Fryman	Worcestershire Association of Local Councils
Mr A Johnson	Herefordshire Council
Mrs H l'Anson	Herefordshire Council
Prof J W Raine	Malvern Hills District Council
Mr P A Tuthill	Worcestershire County Council
Ms J Wood	Malvern Hills District Council
Mr R Yeates	Forest of Dean District Council

#### **Non-Elected members:**

Mr W Barnes	Forestry Commission
Prof R Bryant	Hereford & Worcester Earth Heritage Trust
Ms S Faulkner	NFU West Midlands
Mr I George	Historic England
Mr J Hervey-Bathurst	County Land & Business Association
Mr F Hill	Campaign to Protect Rural England
Ms H McDowall	Natural England

#### **Co-Opted Members:**

Mr A Lee	Herefordshire Local Access Forum
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## **Agenda**

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page No</b>
1	<b>Apologies and Substitutes</b>	
2	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
3	<b>To elect a Chairman</b>	

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Wednesday, 23 October 2019

Item No	Subject	Page No
4	<b>To appoint a Vice Chairman</b>	
5	<b>Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting</b> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2019	
6	<b>Community Transport Project</b> To receive a short presentation from Jacqui Philips CEO of Community Action Malvern on a project to bring people into the Malvern Hills AONB.	
7	<b>A summary of the Landscapes Review</b> To receive a report from Paul Esrich (AONB Partnership Manager) on the Landscapes Review. To note and then to discuss any issues pertinent to the Malvern Hills AONB.	1 - 14
8	<b>Environment and Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery</b> To receive a report from Paul Esrich and to discuss key themes, recommendations and priority actions.	15 - 32
9	<b>Development and Land Use Change in the setting of the Malvern Hills AONB</b> To receive a report from Paul Esrich and to discuss and endorse the proposed Position Statement.	33 - 42
10	<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b> To receive a report from David Armitage, AONB Partnership Assistant Manager.	43 - 44
11	<b>Information Items</b> To note the items for information.	45 - 48
12	<b>Verbal Reports from Partners</b>	
13	<b>Dates of Future Meetings</b> Meeting Dates 2020  Friday 24 April 2020 Friday 6 November 2020	
	If you have any other contributions that you would like to bring to the meeting, please contact Paul Esrich tel: 01905 845057.	

## **MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **A SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPES REVIEW**

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#### **Recommendation**

1. **The Committee is recommended to:**
  - a) **Note the publication of the Landscapes Review report;**
  - b) **Raise and discuss any issues pertinent to the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership and to its work moving forward, including in the short and longer terms.**

#### **Background**

2. Following a year long, independent review of the National Parks and AONBs of England a Final Report entitled Landscapes Review was published on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019, an important date coinciding with the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act - the legislation which brought these designations into being.
3. The report was produced by its principal author Julian Glover at the request of the previous Environment Minister, the Rt Hon. Michael Gove and in furtherance of a commitment in the Government's 25 year Environment Plan. Julian was supported by a panel comprising Ewen Cameron, Sarah Murkherjee, Jim Dixon, Fiona Reynolds and Jake Fiennes. Sarah visited the Malvern Hills AONB earlier in the year, meeting with a number of staff and key partners and visiting a variety of local sites. The local 'Mondays up the Malverns' project supported by our Sustainable Development Fund features in the Landscape Review report (page 79) as a case study. Our Partnership's (Malvern Hills JAC) submission was one of 2,500 responses received as part of the formal call for evidence. The Malvern Hills AONB Unit has also responded to further information requests over the past six months (made to all national landscapes), including queries in respect of financial and administrative matters. This work has helped the review panel to base its findings on empirical/qualitative observations and scrutiny.
4. Government has not yet indicated when it expects to make a full response to the review report.

#### **Summary of Key Findings**

5. The full report runs to 168 pages but is well written, accessible and easy to read. Members have previously received an email containing a link to it:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf)

6. What follows is an attempt to summarise some key points and messages. A list of all the 27 key proposals made in the report can be found at Appendix 1.

### **Aspiration...**

7. The review makes the case for wanting our national landscapes to work together with big ambitions so they are greener, more beautiful and open to everyone. It states that 'our system of national landscapes (44 in total) should be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing and must find innovative ways to collaborate to become more than the sum of their parts'.

8. The review highlights that our national landscapes are just that; 'they are England's soul and we should care for them as such'.

### **What has been working well?**

9. The review recognises that there has been huge energy, enthusiasm and examples of success across our National Parks and AONBs. This has included farm cluster networks, school engagement, volunteer schemes and all sorts of joint working and dialogue on a diverse range of topics including wildlife conservation, tourism, planning and design, supporting local landowners and businesses, whilst also dealing with all of the complexities of local and central government. The panel recognises that activities like these happen every day, not much thanks is given for them and yet much of it is done well for relatively small sums of money. The panel reports that 'AONBs have become good at partnership working; lacking any resources of their own they have had to be'.

10. The report demonstrates the many good examples of the way sympathetic farming practices can help support nature and states that well-managed farming systems, particularly in those national landscapes in the uplands, should be viewed as good in themselves.

### **What has not been working so well?**

11. The Review has been hard-hitting in several areas stating for example that there is currently limited evidence of a wider common ambition; and that the national zeal of the founding mission for landscape protection has been eroded over time. The panel believes that the national landscapes culture has not kept pace with the changes and demands in our society, nor responded with vigour to the decline in the diversity of the natural environment.

12. The review highlights an apparent disconnect with the wider public. Our National Parks and AONBs are national landscapes for the benefit of all, receiving tax-payers money, yet much of UK's society has little engagement, knowledge, or appreciation of these areas. The governance frameworks for National Parks especially were found to be deeply unrepresentative of the country's diverse communities.

13. The review found that partnerships need to be strengthened and more representative of our diverse rural and urban communities. The current system of governance for both National Parks and AONBs requires substantial reform; the way

that we protect and improve our landscapes need to change radically to take far greater account of modern pressures and the pace of change. The report evidences a general lack of urgency in responding to the decline in the diversity of the natural environment and the climate crisis citing critical commentary from organisations such as the RSPB, and the National Trust, and the continuing downward trajectory in the condition of what should be exemplar areas, including for example our Sites of Special Scientific Interest – SSSIs. Often it has been shown that there has been a lack of sufficient data; ‘until we know what we have got, and what we have lost, efforts at landscape-scale work on nature will be incremental’.

### **Key Proposals:**

14. The review sets out its findings and proposals across five themes:
  - Landscapes Alive for Nature and Beauty
  - Landscapes for Everyone
  - Living Landscapes
  - More Special Places
  - New Ways of Working.

### Chapter 1: Landscapes Alive for Nature and Beauty

15. The report argues that National Parks and AONBs should be leading the way in terms of the delivery of key government targets, as promoted through Professor Lawton's Review and the new 25 Year Environment Plan. The panel highlights that from all of the responses received, more than any other thing, the strongest call was for our national landscapes to do much more for nature. Despite some achievements the negative trends affecting wildlife across the UK have not been reversed in our national landscapes, this must change. Nature recovery requires greater strategic leadership and greater government commitment; the report recognises the challenges and the reality that a huge amount of what happens in our landscapes has been shaped by things over which our landscape bodies have had little control. The report repeatedly stresses the important and positive role farming can play in nature recovery, the enthusiasm for coming together with wider partners is growing and should be encouraged; this includes recognising and carefully balancing legitimate shooting interests.

### **The report lists 6 key proposals (Proposal 1- Proposal 6) focused on "Landscapes Alive for Nature and Beauty":**

16. Proposal 1 is especially significant for AONBs, setting out the case for a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature, not simply relying on protecting and enhancing natural beauty. Performance should be assessed through a new, and independent, National Landscapes Service.

17. Proposals 2-5 cover the importance of nature, natural capital and climate change audits, strengthened Management Plans, and maximising the opportunities of Nature Recovery Networks and the (new) Environmental Land Management Schemes (NELMS). There is a recommendation that protected landscapes need to look beyond their boundaries to help ensure we have the most robust landscape and wildlife networks. Future Management Plans need to set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration as and where this can be applied).

18. Proposal 6 makes the case for strengthening our national landscapes within the planning system, especially our AONBs, who should be given statutory consultee status and encouragement to develop local plans.

## Chapter 2: Landscapes for Everyone

19. The report provides a powerful narrative on the value and importance of landscapes. Glover recognises the widely held view, that is so hard to quantify, that our landscapes and their natural beauty matter in themselves and that our green and pleasant land makes more people proud of their country than anything else, even above the NHS and the royal family.

20. Today our National Parks and AONBs provide a constant backdrop for a plethora of activity, not just walking, cycling and horse riding but fresh activities such as mass all-night walks for charities, volunteering, music festivals, scuba diving, glamping, arts trails, competitive triathlons etc. The report found that significantly more people visit AONBs (estimated 170 million) than our English National Parks (estimated 100 million) - there are more AONBs and many are within 30 minutes' drive from sizeable conurbations.

21. Despite the wide recreational opportunities and the undoubted popularity for our national landscapes, the review found that many communities in modern Britain feel that these landscapes hold no relevance for them. Evidence from Natural England (2018) studies for example, serve to highlight that particular groups frequently disconnected from our natural landscapes are the older, the young – especially adolescents, those from lower socio-economic groups and weaker educational backgrounds, and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The panel are firm in its belief and desire that our national landscapes should be open and accessible to all - regardless of age or background. Whilst there is excellent engagement work taking place across our National Parks and AONBs the panel found that this was uneven.

22. The panel were highly critical of the lack of diversity within the governing bodies of National parks and AONBs management/governance boards, for example highlighting the imbalance between male and female (68:32), the lack of youth with an average age of 64 in NPs and 54 in AONBs. Black, Asian and minority ethnic board members are extremely rare (<0.8%).

23. The review recognises the strength and value of volunteering, but again found continual inconsistencies in the coverage and opportunities provided. AONBs were deemed to do their best, even though they are currently not charged with the 'people' purpose, nor funded to deliver it.

24. The review recognises the mounting evidence for clear and powerful correlations between access to open space and enhanced quality of life, including the benefits to our physical and mental wellbeing - these include lowering blood pressure, increasing cardio-vascular health and improving mood. There is a huge opportunity to utilise our natural landscapes more fully, through for example growing social prescribing programmes to help aid the wider public purse.

25. The review is critical of the general support for visitors provided by our national landscapes with a need to improve on the basics, such as information, websites and

signage and on-the-ground help. The review acknowledges that they have heard from many of the friction that can be caused by some visitor activity, and there is a need for better education and information provision to help rectify this, including effective dispersal from "honeypot" sites.

26. The review makes a strong case for the future development and expansion of ranger services, for National Parks (currently with 177 rangers) and AONBs (currently with 24) which the panel has identified as invaluable for providing links between visitors, land managers, local people and place. The review is critical of the lack of training opportunities for ranger services.

**The report lists ten proposals (Proposal 7 – Proposal 16) focused on "Landscapes for Everyone":**

27. Proposal 7 calls for a stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscape Services. The review calls for a clear second legal purpose applied to all of our national landscapes to:

- *'actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation's health and wellbeing'*.

28. The Sandford Principle should remain in place, and be extended to AONBs, to ensure the primacy of the first purpose.

29. Proposals 8-13 are aspirational in reaching out to new visitors and audiences through ambitious activity programmes focusing on children (a night under the stars for every child), ethnic diversity (new long-term engagement plans) and other marginalised groups (reviewing and revitalising a new version of the National Parks MOSAIC programmes). There is a call for the expansion and enhancement of ranger services and volunteering opportunities across all of our national landscapes (both with clearer national consistencies and a more structured approach). There should be a greater 'enabling' role to foster a very wide and inclusive volunteer base, especially focusing on under-represented groups. The review would like to see 1,000 rangers in place across our national landscapes, acting as ambassadors and the friendly and welcoming face of our national landscapes to visitors, school groups, land managers and residents.

30. There should be enhanced information and signs to guide visitors, and landscapes that truly cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing. The latter includes both national conversations with key health bodies and development of local partnerships with local public health teams, clinical commission groups etc. Rights of way should be enhanced to include a network of accessible, hard surface, stile-free paths that are disabled and wheelchair-friendly, with RADAR key gates and provision of all-terrain mobility scooters and routes. AONBs should embrace close working with local highway authorities to ensure they receive the priority they need in our protected landscapes.

31. Proposals 14-16 focus on further access and visitor provision recommending that national landscapes should be supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism (including possible 'tourism zones' under the new Tourism Sector Deal), link better with our family of National Trails and consider further expansion of open

access rights. The review is not supportive of charging mechanisms to help control visitor numbers or raise funds – ‘our national landscapes do not have entry fees and nor should they’, but rather they should rely on leadership, education and good destination management to help shape who comes, what they do and how they benefit from their experience. Partnership sustainable tourism development plans should be encouraged to help reduce environmental impacts and help counter claims that certain places were being overwhelmed.

### Chapter 3: Living in Landscapes

32. The review highlights the importance of the IUCN Category V classification for the UK's national landscapes, recognising the very special relationship and the challenge of combining people and nature. It found that many of our longstanding communities within our protected landscapes are feeling under great pressure, stressing particular anxieties in respect of local house prices and employment, the increasingly limited opportunities for the younger generation, and concerns with limited public transport and the issues of second-home ownership. The review poses critical questions for those who love and shape our landscapes – not 'how do we conserve them?' but 'how do we make sure both natural beauty and society benefit from change rather than suffer? The panel are optimistic for the future.

#### **The report lists 3 key proposals (Proposal 17 - Proposal 20) focused on "Landscapes Alive for Nature and Beauty":**

33. The review finds the current duty in relation to local communities to be vague so Proposal 17 calls for a revised statutory purpose to be applied equally to both National Parks and AONBs to:

- *Foster the economic and community vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.*

34. The review calls for positive action, ‘our landscapes should be encouraging the kinds of economic and social activity that promotes renewed purposes of national landscapes. There's a real future in good jobs in our rural areas (*and most precious landscapes*) including growing and processing local food, sustainable tourism, nature recovery and land management, and many more sympathetic enterprises connected with their purposes’.

35. Proposal 18 seeks a new National Landscape Housing Association to focus on building affordable homes. This recognises the need to further the often good work undertaken by rural housing associations and local authorities. The review highlights strongly the need for greater clarity in the application of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular in terms of the 'exceptional circumstances' for major development, which clearly should not be contravened for large housing schemes under the argument that there are no other available sites outside the protected landscapes. The review recommends that the NPPF is amended to allow greater flexibility to deliver affordable homes in national landscapes generally.

36. As in the wider countryside, car use is the dominant mode of transport in journeying to and from our national landscapes, however **Proposal 19** advocates a new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new,

more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes. Whilst unrealistic to reverse car use, there should be more encouragement for joint-funded initiatives to help secure more sustainable transport, with improved integrated non-car services to help reduce the carbon impact of the visitor economy. In terms of carbon reduction, there should be a much greater push for suitable e-charging points, national landscapes need to collaborate and push for this – urban areas (*and motorway service stations*) are leading the way.

#### Chapter 4: More Special Places

37. The review firmly states that it does not want to see protection removed from any landscape which is currently protected, however the terms of reference requested an assessment of new designations.

38. It is widely acknowledged that many of our protected landscapes are deeply rural and distant from our largest areas of population, often located to the west rather than the east, in our uplands not lowlands, and invariably inland. The system of designations has evidently been remarkably static, not responsive - this has enabled some national landscapes, especially National Parks (e.g the Peak District and Lake District) to become very much rooted to the places that they serve, and respected as a result.

39. The panel agree that the division of landscapes into two distinct families, namely National Parks and AONBs is however unhelpful, both should be part of one greater whole, albeit with varied powers and sources of funding. The review acknowledges that some AONBs have been requesting re-designation as National Parks. The panel also found the current process for boundary changes to national landscapes, and new designations and new types of designations requires fresh impetus.

40. The review felt that there was need for greater imagination to help link landscape to people in those areas close to our urban centres and that in some cases this may not necessitate the need for formal designation.

#### **The report lists 3 key proposals (Proposal 20 - Proposal 22) focused on "More Special Places":**

41. Proposals 20-22 call for new designated landscapes and a new National Forest, new landscape approaches in our cities and coast with a city park competition, and a much improved designation process. The review recommends that additional funding be provided to create three new National Parks from some of the larger AONBs, based upon proposals from The Chilterns, The Cotswolds and Dorset (combining both Dorset and East Devon AONBs). The review recognises that there are opponents as well as supporters of a new status for these areas and suggests that Natural England and ministers consider the case for each.

42. The review endorses the growing support for a new landscape designation for the Forest of Dean and acknowledges other persuasive cases in need of further consideration. The review highlights the strengths of the National Forest (NF) programme and makes the case for a NF in the north midlands.

43. The review again makes the case for a more joined up approach with new and enhanced connections between neighbouring protected landscapes – helping to

shape wider management decisions, including for example emerging Environmental Land Management Schemes. The review highlights the value and importance of our maritime areas, off-shore and on-shore ; furthermore the need for connecting with important city initiatives (London – now a declared National Park City, and the West Midlands). The panel specifically highlight green belt planning and the need for more ambitious socially and ecologically beneficial land in the future to benefit wildlife, landscape beauty and access provision, alongside well-designed new city development.

44. There is a summary of the findings in respect of the complexity and length of the designations process. New designations have been slow to materialise; in the last 20 years there have just been two new National Parks created and the further extension of two NPs. The review believes that the process is not itself flawed, but the main reason for the delays has been a lack of national resourcing and prioritisation. The new National Landscapes Service should drive this activity in the future.

## Chapter 5: New Ways of Working

45. The review panel set out not to get heavily caught up in the mire of structures and processes but look strategically outwards at the bigger picture; however there has been a realisation that very often the excellent work accomplished in our protected landscapes has often been in spite of the laws, policies and systems, not because of them.

46. The panel have found that the two-tier system of protection for National Parks and AONBs has not been helpful, reinforcing differences in governance, finance and administration. This has resulted in a misplaced perception that AONBs are somehow second grade – yet they are often indistinguishable on the ground from National Parks. The 34 AONBs cover some 60% of England's landscape, contain just as much important nature and attract more visitors. The review highlights the vital contribution of AONBs in promoting the understanding and enjoyment of their places, achieved without the recognition in law or equivalent support in resources.

47. The review is critical of the general lack of collaboration between the National Parks and AONBs, although there are some notable exceptions.

48. The review argues that national landscapes have not always had the support within Whitehall that they should, with a view that National Parks and AONBs have been failing to punch at or above their collective weight. This has not been helped by changes in central government agencies over the years and associated reductions in support from the centre. Consequently our protected landscapes have collectively often been on the periphery of Defra business, and not at the vanguard of officials' thoughts in achieving the government priorities of the day.

49. National landscapes will receive a total of £55.4 m from Defra for 2019-20. Not a big sum in government terms, with the panel recognising the ongoing significant disparity of funding between National Parks (£48.7m) and AONBs (£6.7m). The original funding agreements are, in the words of the review, 'fossilised and complex' with Annex 3 providing a summary of the different formulas applied. The now dated AONB formula is: (AONB area in Km<sup>2</sup> x £60 per Km<sup>2</sup>) + (number of local authorities x £6,000 per local authority) = total AONB grant. The review is critical in stating that

there is no clear and concise explanation for the funding formula, with the grant income not clearly set according to priorities. The panel are praiseworthy of the work accomplished by AONBs and their ability to be enterprising in delivering with and through others. The National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) and the Rural Development Programme's LEADER programme have been particularly important sources of additional funding to National Parks and AONBs. As a whole however the review concludes that the funding for our national landscapes is not as well-diversified as it could or should be.

**The report identifies 5 key proposals (Proposal 23 - Proposal 27) focused on "New Ways of Working":**

50. Proposal 23 calls for a stronger purpose in law for our national landscapes. As set out in earlier chapters, the review makes a compelling case for the purposes for National Parks and AONBs to be updated and to apply equally to both types of designation.

51. Subject to further debate and legal discussion the review recommends the following three purposes:

1. *Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage.*
2. *Actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation's health and wellbeing.*
3. *Foster the economic vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.*

52. The review makes it clear that where there is conflict between any of the three purposes, then as applied through an updated 'Sandford Principle' greater weight must be given to the first purpose.

53. Proposal 24 is particularly relevant to the AONB family, recommending that AONBs should be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources and renamed as National Landscapes. The panel feel that this is pressing.

54. Proposals 6, 23 and 27 are all specific to strengthening the position of AONBs, renamed as 'National Landscapes' to help raise their status to that alongside National Parks and remove the shackles of its rambling title, and its acronym that few know and many get wrong.

55. Proposals 25-27 make the case for a new National Landscapes Service, further reformed governance to inspire ambition across our national landscapes and to better reflect wider society, and a new financial model with crucially more money, greater security and increased focus on entrepreneurial approaches. They envisage a small, expert board, appointed by Defra and working to bring our National Parks and AONBs (National Landscapes) together: inspiring collaborative and outward looking approaches, sharing and supporting peer review, and stimulating joint action and initiatives across our 44 most beautiful landscapes to help the nation.

56. There is a recommended overhaul of governance arrangements, especially National Parks, which should have a much reduced main board (between 9 and 12 members), working alongside a wider partnership advisory group representative of

the various interest and specialist groups. There should be a much greater effort to secure diversity - of social background, gender, age, ethnicity, (dis)ability. AONBs should consider adopting similar structures where possible, although in some cases, for smaller AONBs for example, simpler governance models may be more applicable. There should be scope to encourage wider citizenship opportunities and engagement within the main NP and AONB boards. There is a reaffirmation that the primary task of each board would be to prepare and drive ambitious delivery of Management Plans, delivering for nature, people and communities.

57. The review covers the important issue of funding and resources in **Proposal 27**. A compelling argument is made in respect of the continuation of central government funding, and that this should be both extended further and secured across a five-year period. However, the panel are clear in their recommendations that there should not be an over-reliance upon core funding, but rather an ongoing drive to a new funding model – one that can secure diverse, larger and sustainable income. Building on earlier findings the review highlights the need for a simpler, fairer and dynamic system of funding, and that in future this should be overseen directly by the National Landscapes Service.

58. The review proposes that the original funding formulas are revisited for all of our protected landscapes and carefully re-calibrated across a range of criteria and phased in over time. In the more immediate period, it is proposed that AONBs need an uplift in their funding and that the current £6.7m (several million less than the South Downs N. Park alone receives) is raised to £13.4m. The review suggests that the local authority funding element for AONBs should continue.

59. The review reported considerable tensions over various proposals to support our National Parks in developing charitable status, furthering commercial links etc. This the panel found very surprising - with evidently a collective failure of coordination, ambition and expertise. Looking ahead the review makes the case for a far more ambitious entrepreneurial and philanthropic programme of fundraising across the entire protected landscapes family.

## **Conclusions:**

60. The review argues that looking ahead there is a need for big ambitions - much more must be done for nature and natural beauty. Much more must be done for people who live in and visit our nationally protected landscapes. National landscape bodies themselves should do much more to reach out and invite people in. The panel stress that our national landscapes should be alive for people, and places where everyone is actively welcomed and where there are unrivalled opportunities to enjoy their natural beauty - in essence landscapes for all. There is recognition that conservation and farming are partners, and that there should be farming for nature as well as food.

61. The review panel were appreciative of all involved and recognised the excitement and optimism of what can be achieved in the future. 'This moment matters – aspiring to protect and enhance what we have will make England's special places even better'.

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## **Appendix 1 – The Landscapes Review’s 27 proposals**

- 1: National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service.
- 2: The state of nature and natural capital in our national landscapes should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action.
- 3: Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law.
- 4: National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries.
- 5: A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes.
- 6: A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7: A stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscapes Service.
- 8: A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child.
- 9: New long-term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors.
- 10: Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing.
- 11: Expanding volunteering in our national landscapes.
- 12: Better information and signs to guide visitors.
- 13: A ranger service in all our national landscapes, part of a national family.
- 14: National landscapes supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism.
- 15: Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family.
- 16: Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes.
- 17: National landscapes working for vibrant communities.
- 18: A new National Landscapes Housing Association to build affordable homes.
- 19: A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes.

20: New designated landscapes and a new National Forest.

21: Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition.

22: A better designations process.

23: Stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes.

24: AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes.

25: A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts.

26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society.

27: A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising.

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**MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
8 NOVEMBER 2019****ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND NATURE  
RECOVERY**

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**Recommendation**

- 1. The Committee is recommended to:**
  - a) comment on and discuss the three central themes identified;**
  - b) participate in a discussion to identify good practice, recommendations to partner bodies and priority actions.**

**Background****National**

**2.** In May 2019 the House of Commons declared an Environment and Climate Emergency, following the finding of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change that to avoid a more than 1.5°C rise in global warming, global emissions would need to fall by around 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by around 2050. The declaration recognises the devastating impact that volatile and extreme weather will have on UK food production, water availability, public health and through flooding and wildfire damage. It also notes that the UK is currently missing almost all of its biodiversity targets, with an alarming trend in species decline, and that cuts of 50% to the funding of Natural England are counterproductive to tackling those problems. It calls on the Government to increase the ambition of the UK's climate change targets under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve net zero emissions before 2050, to increase support for and set ambitious, short-term targets for the roll-out of renewable and low carbon energy and transport, and to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors. It further calls on the Government to lay before the House within the next six months urgent proposals to restore the UK's natural environment and to deliver a circular, zero waste economy.

**Local**

**3.** Table 1 summarises the position of the five local authority (at Unitary, County and District level) members of the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership with regards to declaring an Environment and Climate Emergency.

Table 1

Local authority	Emergency declared?	Date of declaration	Target/commitment
Forest of Dean District Council	Yes	06/12/18	Council and District carbon neutral by 2030
Gloucestershire County Council	Yes	15/05/19	80% reduction in the Council's corporate carbon emissions by 2030. Carbon neutral county by 2050.
Herefordshire Council	Yes	08/03/19	Council aspires to be carbon neutral by 2030
Malvern Hills District Council	Yes	23/07/19	To move as quickly as possible to net zero carbon emissions across the district (hopefully by 2030)
Worcestershire County Council	No		Aim to be carbon neutral by 2050

4. Whilst the majority of local authority partners have declared an Environment and/or Climate emergency few if any of these declarations make reference to nature decline.

### **National Association for AONBs (NAAONB)**

5. At its annual conference in July 2019 the National Association for AONBs launched the Colchester Declaration on nature recovery in AONBs – see Appendix 1. This sets out a firm intention to significantly step up the scale and pace of action on nature recovery in the context of the Environment and Climate Emergency. The National Association and staff from AONB teams are now working up the detail of how the declaration will be delivered.

### **Questions**

#### **What role does the AONB Partnership have, should we raise our game and if so, how?**

6. The Malvern Hills AONB Partnership has been championing nature recovery for a long time. The AONB Management Plan also states the importance of reducing carbon emissions through mitigation and by supporting environmental adaptations to make the area more resilient to changing conditions. Many policies in the AONB Management Plan contribute to nature recovery and to lowering carbon emissions. Over the years the AONB Sustainable Development Fund has supported a number of projects which aim to address these issues.

7. The AONB Partnership has the roles of delivery and of influencing. The AONB staff team's own direct delivery is relatively small and targeted. It depends on the capacity of the team, the effectiveness of what we do and our priorities. Individual partner organisations also have a lot of delivery capacity. How we work effectively together is an important factor. To influence well, clear thinking and positions and effective engagement will be vital. The recently published Glover Review (see paper 7) should help to reinforce our role by raising our expectations, influence and capacity.

## How do we best harness the energy of Partnership members?

8. Partnership members can bring their knowledge and also take back things from the Partnership to their organisations and/or communities. They can introduce the staff team to people they know locally and involve them in discussions.

9. Conversations on topics like climate change can lead to people feeling powerless. It is worth thinking about where and how we best fit in. Action is needed from governments, businesses, communities and individuals. These layers interconnect – as individuals we can do things directly ourselves, as well as join groups and with others in our communities, and exercise our influence on businesses as consumers and workers, and on governments as voters and citizens. Government can influence businesses and individuals. Our government can influence those of other countries.

10. Action planning can help us to focus on what needs to be done next. We can say what we're already doing, but we know this isn't enough. We need to keep an eye on the targets and timescales and challenge ourselves as to whether we are doing enough. If we can't see all the steps ahead to get to a target we should move towards it anyway with our best knowledge. The later steps are likely to become more obvious when we have made the first ones.

## Central themes

### Nature recovery

11. For many people nature decline is as threatening an emergency as climate change and both are inextricably linked. This needs to be recognised, alongside the fact that nature recovery and restoring ecosystems provide some of the essential solutions to reaching zero carbon emissions, as well as addressing many other factors vital for our survival and quality of life. These are not just distant global issues, they are the main challenges now facing us.

12. *“The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment has shown the strong interrelationship between climate change, the loss of biodiversity and human wellbeing. Climate change has been identified as a primary driver of biodiversity loss, already altering every part of nature. Likewise, the loss of biodiversity contributes to climate change, for example when we destroy forests we emit carbon dioxide, the major “human-produced” greenhouse gas. We cannot solve the threats of human-induced climate change and loss of biodiversity in isolation. We either solve both or we solve neither. As policymakers around the world grapple with the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss, it is essential that they understand the linkages between the two so that their decisions and actions address both.”*

13. From article “Loss of biodiversity is just as catastrophic as climate change” 6th May 2019, Sir Robert Watson - Chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and former Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

14. There is a need to halt and reverse the (often historical) loss of good quality habitats in the Malvern Hills AONB, something often associated with land management practices though development is also a factor. To reverse nature loss we also need to restore and recreate habitat networks across the landscape. Local Nature Partnership and county Biodiversity Partnerships need proper resourcing if they are to raise their influence and activity, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other sectors.

15. A whole range of mechanisms for looking after nature need to deliver more, including:

- planning decisions and enforcement action by various regulators to prevent direct harm;
- agriculture and land use policy supporting sustainable activity;
- government schemes for farm conservation with good incentives and minimal barriers, and good advice for private landowners;
- ownership of key sites by conservation bodies and trusts and linking them with the wider landscape;
- ambitious projects to recreate and restore habitats, needing public, private and third sector finance and partnership working; and
- grassroots action by communities and individuals.

16. Like climate change, loss of nature can be subtle and not very visible. Our landscape still looks pretty and may not appear to be in emergency. But we have lost and are losing 'bio-abundance' as well as biodiversity. As well as some extinctions, once common species are becoming rare. Baselines shift and people may not notice or worry about these changes. Some 'keystone' species have an especially vital role in ecosystems, such as pollinators which enable crops and flowers to reproduce, earthworms which aerate soil, trees which bind river banks. Many species are already in decline but they can recover. Recent changes in land management practices at places such as the Knepp Estate in Sussex provide a dramatic reminder of just how much wildlife can be supported when management approaches are altered, though such dramatic shifts in management are not expected to become the norm. The Environment Bill introduces provisions requiring local authorities across England to develop Nature Recovery Strategies.

17. We need big programmes to engage and re-engage young people and adults with nature, to harness their energy and improve their wellbeing. Services need to join up to improve provision.

## **Farming and land management for zero carbon and nature recovery**

18. Making change here will be vital to achieving net zero carbon emissions and nature recovery. Agriculture accounts for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, through methane and nitrous oxide as well as CO<sub>2</sub>. A recent report by the NFU sets out a plan to get UK agriculture to net zero by 2040, based on productive efficiency, carbon storage and bioenergy and renewables. The high anticipated contribution of bioenergy in this may not be compatible with allowing enough capacity in the land for nature recovery. The RSA's Food, Farming and Countryside

Commission calls for a farming and land policy which addresses climate and ecosystems while also delivering much better for health (see Appendix 2).

19. Land management also has a vital role in carbon management, to help us reach net zero. Planting trees has a place in this, but this is about much more than carbon offsetting. Soils are a vital means of carbon storage and they need better management. Pastures store carbon, some of which is lost when the land is cultivated. Increasing the organic matter in soils will store more carbon as well as help with water retention and natural fertility, reducing the need for artificial fertilisers (the main source of nitrous oxide greenhouse gas). On pasture, soil organic matter can be raised by techniques such as mob grazing where stock are put at high densities for a short period onto tall sward pastures aiming to graze some of the vegetation, leave some and trample some into the soil. This can also be beneficial for biodiversity.

20. More trees and woodland will help with carbon offsetting as well as providing many other benefits, but offsetting shouldn't be seen as an easy way to avoid challenges of reducing emissions in other sectors. To be effective, trees planted need to be of suitable species for the location and the landscape – 'the right tree in the right place' - and will need proper maintenance. There are many examples of new trees having been planted but not properly cared for with the end result being dead or unhealthy trees. The current need to plant more trees is also challenged by a growing raft of tree diseases which can lead to uncertainty about what will survive, as well as what is appropriate to plant in any given area. The availability of land can also be an issue with many farmers understandably cautious in the current climate about making decisions which commit themselves in the long term. That said, a great many trees can be planted in areas such as along stream lines and in hedgerows, in places which are not used for or which are suboptimal for other farming practices and where they will reinforce landscape character and assist in nature recovery.

21. Some calls to cease livestock farming because of methane production and to convert grazed land to growing food for direct human consumption or for nature may be too simplistic. Especially in the hills, land which is less fertile may not grow human food directly and ploughing sloping land may result in loss of soil and harm to rivers. It is also important to consider that land can deliver multiple benefits – for example low intensity grazing on the Malvern Hills provides a food output whilst also helping to maintain a high value area for nature conservation and for human enjoyment, contributing to health and wellbeing. High quality pasture-fed livestock from nature-friendly low input systems is likely to have an important place in a low carbon agriculture and is not the same thing as intensive livestock rearing on arable-grown feeds.

22. The steps needed to reach zero carbon and nature recovery may alter the character of our landscape – but, if carefully managed, these changes can enhance it. Ecosystem functions matter, natural beauty is not static and the AONB designation should not be seen as a barrier to the right kind of change. More work is needed on what that change looks like in this area. The New Environmental Land Management System (NELMS) will be a vital tool and needs the best thinking and engagement in its development to make sure it works well. There could be a collaborative programme of visits and workshops about zero carbon and nature friendly farming, as well as demonstration farms and links with universities.

## Development, energy, transport & tourism for zero carbon and nature recovery

23. Net zero and nature recovery cannot be achieved if the political and corporate focus is on economic growth at all costs. The goals of net zero and nature recovery need to be built into partners' visions at the highest levels. Doing this can deliver better quality of life for people as well as new forms of economic activity which are sustainable. On energy and transport managing demand as well as changing supply will be important. This means people consuming less and travelling less. Planning policy and decisions are aiming to support sustainability, e.g. by providing homes close to services and where people work, but this isn't currently adequate to achieve carbon targets. More needs to be done with regards to planning and development. Mandatory biodiversity net gain is included in the new Environment Bill.

*24. 'Local Plans in England are not dealing with carbon dioxide emissions reduction effectively, nor are they consistently delivering the adaptation actions necessary to secure the long-term resilience of local communities. This inaction is partly due to a chronic lack of resources in local government, which had contributed to a loss of skills on energy and climate change.'*

RTPI 2019, Rising to the Climate Crisis – A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change

25. Natural Capital – a key tenet of the 25 year Environment Plan - needs to become a central principle in planning and economic development. The potential of natural flood management techniques and biodiversity net gain need to be maximised. The Malvern Hills AONB Unit has recently trialled use of the Natural Capital Planning Toolkit (NCPT) in the area. A report on this work can be found at:

<http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Malvern-Hills-NCPT-Assessment-Report-N19-MH-XX.pdf>

26. Renewable energy is a challenge for protected landscapes and a potential conflict between conserving natural beauty and other environmental goals. Policies in the AONB Management Plan are against industrial scale developments in the AONB whilst being positive about small scale renewables, especially where they support the management of core elements of the AONB landscape.

27. The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee is running an enquiry on sustainable tourism. Some key issues related to this subject may include:

- The need for structural change in the tourism industry as in every other part of the economy, whilst recognising there are growth opportunities in expanded domestic markets and high-quality sustainable tourism products.
- Sustainability remains a fairly fringe consideration in many parts of the industry, and greater incentives and guidance are needed from government.
- Sustainable tourism needs to be planned in a collaborative way between the industry and public sector bodies on a location-specific basis. Much good practice exists, but many Destination Management Organisations may not be equipped to lead on sustainability.

28. Local authorities may need to provide more support and leadership for tourism businesses on sustainability– addressing energy and transport, supporting plastic-free initiatives and managing as well as promoting our areas as environmentally

sensitive destinations. Previous attempts by the AONB Unit to support partners in recognising and promoting sustainable tourism practices, e.g. through accreditation, have come to very little due to lack of interest from the sector.

29. The emergency we have reached is partly the result of some excesses. However, it is also created by lots of 'normal' behaviour – 'normal' agricultural practices, 'normal' amounts of travel and energy consumption. The majority of evidence suggests these norms cannot now be sustained.

30. There isn't absolute consensus about the problems or the solutions. So alongside action it is important to keep raising these topics and challenging ourselves and others. Natural processes dictate that to restoring nature within the AONB it will also be necessary to look outside of it. The 2017 report 'Zero Carbon Britain' contains some worthy ideas, and extracts from this are provided at Appendix 3.

## **Group discussion**

### **Key themes:**

1. Nature recovery
2. Farming and land management for zero carbon
3. Energy, transport and tourism for zero carbon

### **Possible questions:**

1. What's going well in the Malvern Hills AONB in these areas?
2. What further things can you or your organisation do right now?
3. What support do you need from the AONB Partnership to do this?
4. What should we be recommending partners to do?

## **Supporting Documents**

Appendix 1 - The Colchester Declaration 2019

Appendix 2 - Our Future in the Land

Appendix 3 – Zero Carbon Britain

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# Appendix 1 - The Colchester Declaration 2019

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 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency we are demonstrating our readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

## We believe

1. Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people
2. AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife
3. Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
4. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change
5. The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges

## We pledge

### By July 2020

1. To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.
2. To prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB

### By 2024

1. To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans
2. To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero

### By 2030

1. That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition
2. That 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
3. That 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
4. That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030.

We call on Westminster and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable

## Executive summary



Our future depends on the land. The land nourishes and supports us. It provides for our nutrition, our health and our wellbeing. Food and farming depend critically on the fate of the countryside. Those who live and work here are the stewards of this relationship but the responsibility for it rests with us all. Our own health and the health of the land are inextricably intertwined.

In the last 70 years, this relationship has been broken. Driven by poor policy and perverse incentives, the food and farming system has become one of the main drivers of human and ecosystem crisis. From deforestation, loss of wildlife and soil degradation, to widespread pollution and spiralling diet-related ill-health, people and planet have suffered alike. Far from being the sector that nourishes us, and the land on which we all depend, the system has damaged and depleted our precious and finite resources.

We have relied for too long on the hope that future technologies can repair the damage caused by this. Time is now running out. The actions that we take in the next ten years are critical: to recover and regenerate nature; and to restore health and wellbeing to both people and planet.

The good news is that people are now grasping the extent of this challenge; the call for collective and concerted action is rising. And everywhere, people are responding – shareholders and schoolchildren,

farms and food businesses, and in communities all around the UK. Whilst the challenges are complex and interconnected, we already have many of the tools we need to act.

The RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission is an independent inquiry established in November 2017, with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Chaired by Sir Ian Cheshire, 15 Commissioners were drawn from farming and food businesses, from public health and citizens groups, from thinktanks and universities. The work came at a particularly challenging time in the wake of the EU referendum. But from very early on, the Commissioners agreed that the focus of the work should not be defined by current circumstances. They wanted to tackle the bigger challenges facing the food, farming and countryside sector: from climate and ecosystem breakdown to rising rates of diet-related ill-health.

Commissioners also wanted to hear more from people who are not usually involved in these debates.

“I'm a farmer and I can't afford to buy the food I produce. How ridiculous is that?”

**James, Peak District sheep farmer**

Decades of policy to produce ever cheaper food has created perverse and detrimental consequences. Farm gate prices are low; and whilst food in the supermarkets is getting cheaper, the true cost of that policy is simply passed off elsewhere in society – in a degraded environment, spiraling ill-health and impoverished high streets. The UK has the third cheapest food amongst developed countries, but the highest food insecurity in Europe.

*The cost of just one diet-related illness – Type 2 diabetes – to the NHS, and in lost work and benefits, is nearly £27bn a year.*

"Tell you what lads, you'd want a thick skin to be a farmer right now. Only a matter of time until someone blames us for the disappearance of Shergar & Jimmy Hoffa..."

@willpenrievans on Twitter

Many farmers are at a loss to know what to do for the best. Agroecology or high-tech solutions? More intensification, extensification or diversification? And how to disinvest from investments made in good faith? We found farmers open to change but anxious, and locked into their current business models by debt, skills or circumstance.

*In the UK, agriculture contributes 11 percent of GHG emissions, and is the biggest driver of wildlife loss, with 67 percent decline in the abundance of priority species since 1970 and 13 percent of them now close to extinction.*

"People come here for the lifestyle. That's great, don't get me wrong. But will they stand for the council? Will they coach the kids' football team? Because at the same time the local bloke driving a tractor for £14,000 a year hasn't got a hope of living in this village."

Mark, Nottinghamshire

Nowhere do conflicts in food, farming and the countryside show up more than in discussions about how we use our land and who decides. Debates have become polarised and it is the ground on which the battles for the future of farming and the countryside are being fought.

*Only 8 percent of rural homes are affordable, compared to 20 percent in urban areas; weekly transport costs average £132 in rural areas compared to £71 in urban areas.*

During our inquiry we heard many examples of people already taking action. Inspired by them, and as we conclude this phase of our work, the Commission's recommendations for actions are underpinned by three interdependent principles:

1. Healthy food is every body's business
2. Farming is a force for change
3. The countryside has to work for everyone

We also propose a framework for change to speed up the transition to a more sustainable food and farming system, where radical ambitions can be implemented at scale and at pace, through practical actions by governments, businesses and citizens.

## Healthy food is every body's business

Healthier and life-enhancing diets mean more and better fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts and pulses, less and better meat and dairy, with livestock products coming from climate and nature-friendly production, with zero food waste, and rebuilding our connections with food producers and with each other.

Much attention is directed towards the challenge of feeding nine billion people by 2030. But we already produce more than enough for everyone in the world to eat well. Today, it is inefficiently and unsustainably produced, profligately wasted and unfairly distributed.

To understand how UK farming could contribute to a more sustainable and healthy diet, we explored reactions to this year's high-profile call from the EAT-Lancet Commission which included a recommendation to move to more plant-based diets. We brought farmers and others together with EAT-Lancet scientists, to model scenarios sensitive to the UK's specific conditions. The results highlighted significant areas of convergence, supporting sustainably-produced pasture-fed livestock to make the best of the UK landscape and climate.

This is the time for an historic drive to put health at the heart of our food system. Government holds many of the key levers and must take the lead, in partnerships with businesses and civil society. All effort, policy, legislation, money and resources must be directed towards implementing and accelerating a transition plan for climate, nature, and public health and wellbeing.

### We recommend:

1. Levelling the playing field for a fair food system – good food must become good business
2. Committing to grow the UK supply of fruit, vegetables, nuts and pulses, and products from UK sustainable agriculture, and to using them more in everyday foods
3. Implementing world-leading public procurement, using this powerful tool to transform the market
4. Establishing collaborative community food plans help inform and implement national food strategies and meet the different needs of communities around the UK
5. Reconnecting people and nature to boost health and wellbeing

## Farming is a force for change, unleashing a fourth agricultural revolution driven by public values

The case for change is now urgent and unassailable - farming systems must change radically to become more sustainable. This is a challenge as fundamental as decarbonising our energy system. Many farmers around the world are picking up the challenge and the opportunities with courage and commitment. But some were sceptical about the practicality, fairness or impact of future environmental payments.

In a series of polls and focus groups, we asked farmers what it would take to help them, and the industry as a whole, to transition sustainably. Their priorities were:

- A predictable policy environment – a clear and reliable framework to unlock investment and allow strategic planning
- Relevant innovation – public research investment that matches what farmers need
- Peer-to-peer support – technical, business and social support go hand-in-hand in a sector under pressure
- Fair prices and stable markets – a decent income from their produce so farmers can save, plan and reinvest
- Access to innovative finance – farmers are being asked to adapt to an uncertain future, and need investors and lenders ready to share the risk

Changing farming systems is a serious and long-term task. We propose a transition plan for agriculture that applies ecological principles to food and farming systems, optimising interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment, as well as with the social components of a fair and sustainable food system – a fourth agricultural revolution.

Far from being a revolution that leaves victims in its wake, we want to place farmers in the driving seat to design and lead the change. Working together with industry, stakeholders and government, a transition plan to 2030 must be backed by fair investment, and function from farm scale through landscape scale to national scale.

### We recommend:

1. Designing and implementing a ten-year transition plan for sustainable, agroecological farming by 2030
2. Backing innovation by farmers to unleash a fourth agricultural revolution
3. Making sure every farmer can get trusted, independent advice by training a cadre of peer mentors and farmer support networks
4. Boosting cooperation and collaboration by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors
5. Establishing a National Agroecology Development Bank to accelerate a fair and sustainable transition

A countryside that works for all, and rural communities are a powerhouse for a fair and green economy

How do we best manage all our land for farming, for nature, for climate adaptation, for habitat restoration, for housing, infrastructure, energy and industry? This isn't about a new spatial plan; it is about taking a farsighted, whole systems and systematic view.

Whilst around one percent of people are employed in agriculture, around 72 percent of UK land is farmed. People are part of the landscape; they shape it and are shaped by it. The beauty of the countryside contributes to the local and national identities of rural and urban people alike. Access to the countryside and to the natural world is crucial to wellbeing. This requires flourishing rural economies to sustain vibrant, living, working communities.

It is also in and on the land that new work is needed to respond to the well-rehearsed global challenges. The world of work is changing fast. Amidst the talk of disruptive technologies and their impact on careers, we also need to ask, what is the work needed right now to recover fragile natural and human systems and who will do it? The fierce sense of urgency to tackle the climate emergency is well expressed amongst young people, who will be hurt most directly by degraded ecosystems.

## We recommend:

1. Establishing a national land use framework in England that inspires cooperation based on the public value of land, mediating and encouraging multipurpose uses
2. Investing in the skills and rural infrastructure to underpin the rural economy
3. Creating more good work in the regenerative economy
4. Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need
5. Establishing a National Nature Service that employs the energy of young people to kickstart the regenerative economy

## A framework for change

Radically shifting the whole system is likely to combine incremental, transformational and disruptive change. We need leaders who can hold together broad coalitions of interests, unified around a connecting mission, to imagine a better version of our shared future, and to translate shared intention into collective action.

A radical mission must be underpinned by practical actions. And as we have found throughout our inquiry, people are already doing things to bring a more regenerative future to life. Around the UK, farmers and growers, businesses and communities are bringing their ingenuity to work, to craft creative solutions to the problems they are dealing with day in and day out. Our companion document to the report, Field Guide for the Future, shares their stories, experiences and learning.

Our relationship with the EU and our subsequent trade arrangements are still to be determined. It is vital that the government reflects UK standards in trade deals and champions the multilateral approaches best placed to achieve a consistent approach worldwide. Meanwhile, government already has some useful tools at its disposal to act now. One is the Public Value Framework and we set out how we think this can be imaginatively and practically extended to provide for stronger cross-departmental actions across government, local and regional bodies.

The Natural Capital Committee and others have moved the dial in debates about how public money should be spent for public benefits. The three underpinning principles are compelling. And we think we can go further.



Public money for public goods



all the resources aligned for public value



Polluter pays principle



not just the environment but also health and wellbeing



Net environmental gain



AND fair net social gain

We also need new economic measures. Perverse incentives in one part of the system can drive actions which create unforeseen consequences elsewhere, with huge costs to the public purse, people and planet. Businesses require the right enabling environment to change, with meaningful incentives to enrich public value. To back these up, we call for a strong and escalating regulatory baseline, so that business activities which deplete public value are curtailed. We must make it easy for people to do the right thing and increasingly difficult (or expensive) to do the wrong things.

But we also know that the change required is momentous. Some of our recommendations are straightforward, aligning with others; some require much more deliberation, so that citizens, businesses and communities can work through the complex choices and implications. Our report sets out actions for everyone. In taking this whole systems approach, our responses are both radical and practical, engaging all those who need to act, to do so together.

## Next steps

The Commission will continue to work with partners until the end of October 2019 to help progress and implement our recommendations.

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In this new report, the Zero Carbon Britain team set out to answer a challenging question: **What are the barriers preventing Britain reaching net-zero carbon – and how can we overcome them?**

# ZERO CARBON BRITAIN

**Making it Happen**

**Report in short: a summary of key findings**

**The UN Paris Agreement states that humanity must reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of this century. This is a big shift, but we have no option other than to succeed if we are to avoid really dangerous climate change.**

**S**ince 2007, *Zero Carbon Britain's* research has shown that **we already have all the technologies needed** to reach zero. In the 2015 report *Who's Getting Ready for Zero*, the team mapped 100 peer-reviewed studies and projects demonstrating that we can, technically, reach zero emissions across the globe.

Yet changing how millions of people live is a very special kind of problem, as the forces that

shape our lives exist on many different levels. Rather than an unresolved technical challenge, it is increasingly accepted that we face a mix of economic, cultural and psychological barriers.

*Zero Carbon Britain: Making it Happen* explores these barriers, and sets out the positive, connected approach we need to overcome them – joining up research and practice across disciplines, borders, sectors and scales.

## A 'toolbox' of good ideas

*Zero Carbon Britain: Making it Happen* offers a 'toolbox' of ideas that can help inspire, inform and enable us to make change happen.

Working within an interdisciplinary framework, the report brings together thinking from researchers working in psychology, sociology, political science, economics and other social sciences, as well as faith and spiritual practice, arts and culture. Drawing on a wide range of peer-reviewed journals, books, reports and articles, as well as stories from real-life projects, it explores how we can overcome barriers in innovative ways.

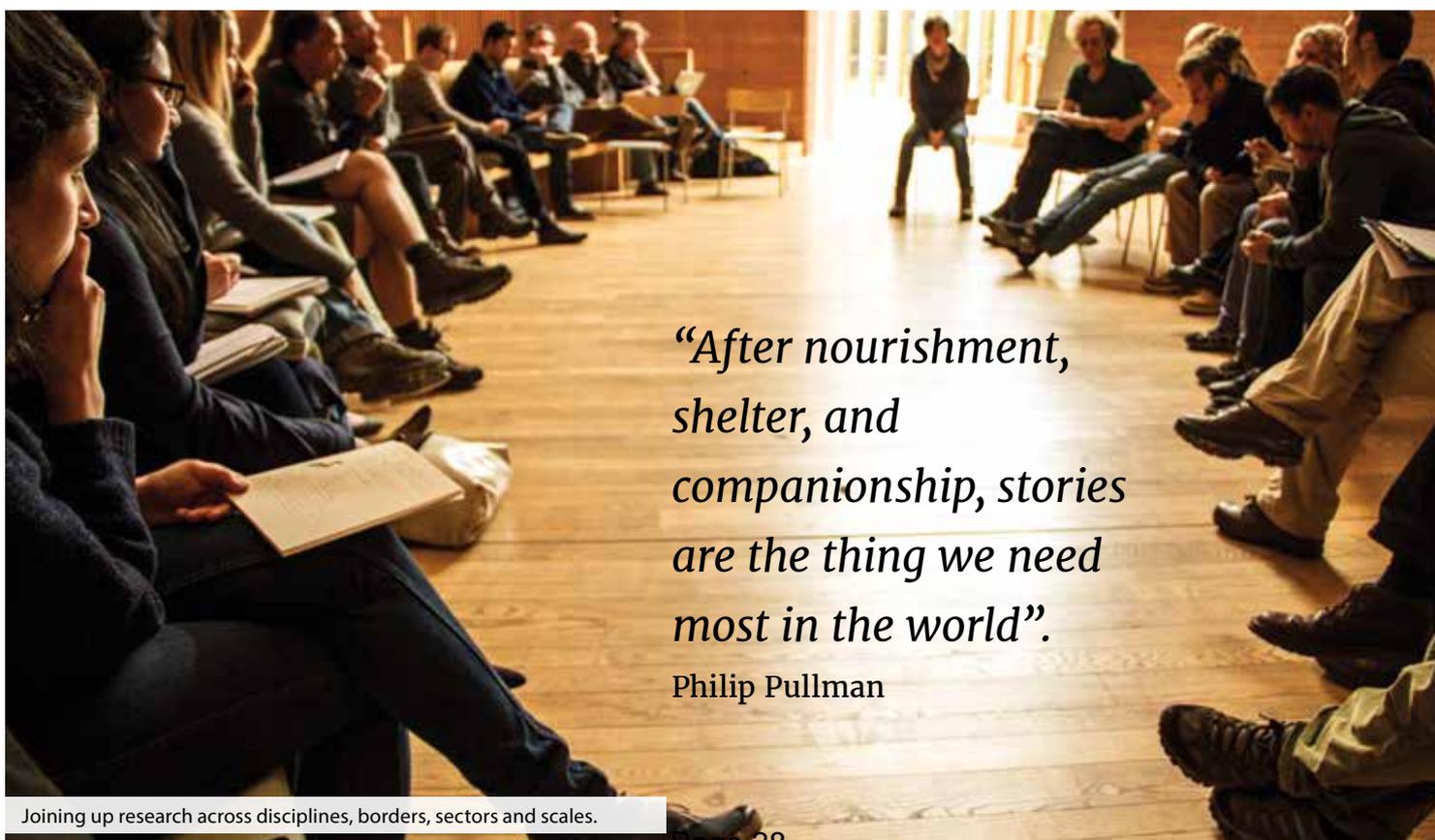


### What does zero carbon look like?

- Existing buildings are retrofitted to cut energy use.
- New buildings must meet net-zero carbon standards.
- Our electricity, heat and transport systems are powered by renewable energy.
- We drive or fly less thanks to better public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and new incentives.
- Food waste is avoided, and the amount of meat in our diets is reduced to healthy levels.



Learning from real life projects – Repair café.



*“After nourishment, shelter, and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world”.*

Philip Pullman

Joining up research across disciplines, borders, sectors and scales.

## Summary of findings

CreativeCommons/MatthewWyneken



Reintroducing zero carbon homes legislation.

### Politics and governance

Decision-makers must build in zero carbon as a policy goal at all levels, including reintroducing zero carbon homes legislation, and increasing the ambition of the UK Climate Change Act.

We can influence policymakers by showcasing evidence that workable solutions exist, and increase cross-party political support by building coalitions, intersecting with issues such as health and inequality. At the same time, the influence of vested interests on the policymaking process can be reduced by strengthening laws on transparency of lobbying.

NGOs and citizens should have the right to challenge public policy and sue polluting companies, and fossil fuel companies can also be challenged through shareholder action and divestment campaigns.

### Economics and finance

A policy shift is urgently needed to end the massive subsidies given to fossil fuels, and adopting a 'polluter pays' principle would ensure that the costs of environmental damage are no longer externalised.

We must move towards an equitable, more

resilient and sustainable economic system, and away from the narrow focus on economic growth and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Key assets like the railways or national grid could be moved back into public ownership, and profits reinvested for public benefit. Investment in zero carbon projects and community energy could be supported through local or municipal banks and citizen finance.

### Psychology and behaviour

While individual behaviour change is important, it should be seen as connected with the broader changes that are needed at social, industrial and governmental levels.

Positive stories of collective action can counter feelings of helplessness, scepticism or detachment, and show others care. We must nurture intrinsic values such as empathy, cooperation and social justice at all scales.

Information that highlights the links between specific actions and their effects is one of the most effective ways of influencing behaviour. 'Social norms' are also powerful. By developing an understanding of how such norms are created and how they function, we can foster zero carbon behaviour as the new normal.

## Summary of findings

### Overcoming carbon lock-in

Industrialised economies have become locked into fossil fuel dependency over many decades. We can challenge this by creating practical, clean energy projects at a local scale. These initiatives need to be supported by government strategies and resources.

Local government also has a key role to play in increasing communities' involvement in the planning process, as well as using planning policy to encourage innovative solutions. Zero carbon alternatives must be made as attractive and convenient as possible, for example by combining energy efficiency re-fits with general home improvements.



©Daniel Schoenen



### Changing worldviews and values

Climate change is not the root problem but a symptom of consumer culture and a growing disconnection from nature and from each other. By increasing opportunities for people to connect with nature, we can build our collective concern for the ecological systems that support us, whilst also improving our happiness and wellbeing.

We can counter consumerism by reducing the working week and promoting the sharing and circular economies. Faith groups, spiritual practice and the arts can also play a powerful role in shifting culture and inspiring action.

### Communication

Stories and images around positive solutions can counter the prevailing 'climate silence' and have been proven to be more effective at inspiring action than negative or fear-based narratives.

It's also important to challenge media bias, for instance by writing to editors who give equal air-time to climate sceptics. We need to tackle the concentration of media ownership, which gives disproportionate influence over public information and opinion, and regulate the kinds of advertising that fuel desire for ever more consumption.

## Let's 'Make it Happen'

Bread Matters and Scotland the Bread



Community baking – Bread Matters.

**There are many solutions, but one overarching conclusion: we must do this together.**

We have all the technologies we need to reach zero carbon – we must work collectively to make things happen.

The shift to zero carbon could be one of the most exciting opportunities in human history. It offers many benefits including better housing, affordable, accessible transport, reduced obesity, improved health, cleaner air and more jobs. We can transform isolated, stressful, consumer-focused lifestyles and find better physical and psychological wellbeing by increasing our sense of connection with community and nature.

Although shifting cultural values isn't easy, there are many powerful lessons from history that show that evolution in our collective thinking can change over just a few years. It will take many of us pulling in the same direction to enable the transition to happen, and each and every one of our actions can contribute. In rising to the urgency of this challenge, we can unleash a sense of common purpose that unites us across communities, across politics and across borders.

We hope this toolbox of good ideas will be useful to those working for positive change.

*Zero Carbon Britain: Making it Happen* (the full report) can be downloaded for free at [www.zerocarbonbritain.org](http://www.zerocarbonbritain.org)



Cleaner air, better health – York Bike Belles.

©Chandra Prasad-Sustrans



Community energy – TGV Hydro.

TGV Hydro Ltd

*“We need to engage in whatever actions appeal to us. There is no act too small, no act too bold. The history of social change is the history of millions of actions, small and large, coming together at certain points in history and creating a power which governments cannot suppress.”*

Zinn (2003)

## Centre for Alternative Technology

Zero Carbon Britain is an initiative from the **Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)**. Established over 40 years ago, CAT is a leading research and educational charity which demonstrates practical solutions for sustainability.

CAT offers a wide variety of practical and academic courses up to postgraduate level and a unique range of educational services for school and university groups.

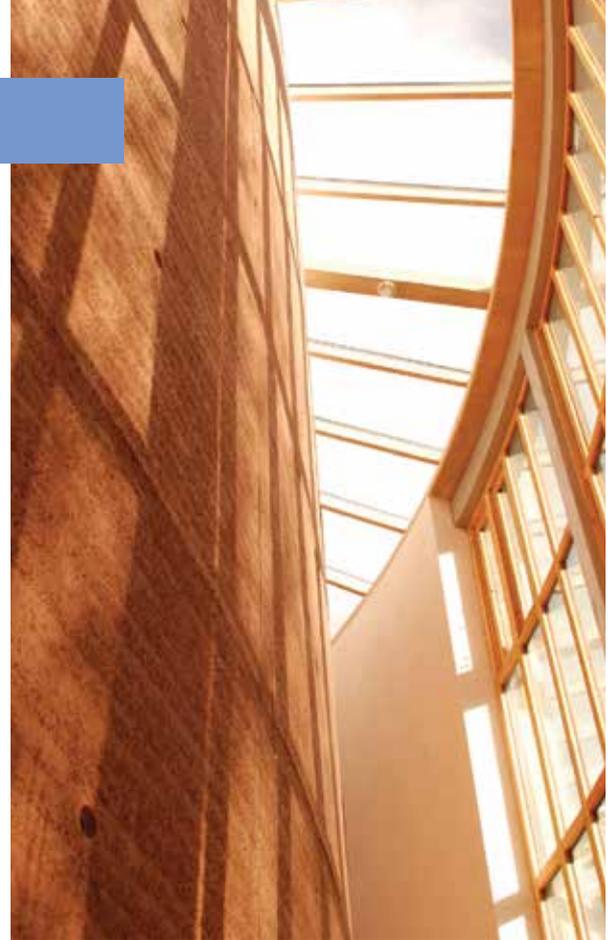
CAT's award winning educational facility – the **Wales Institute for Sustainable Education (WISE)** – and visitor centre are based in Machynlleth, mid-Wales.

 [www.zerocarbonbritain.org](http://www.zerocarbonbritain.org)

 [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)

 #ZCB @centre\_alt\_tech

 Centre for Alternative Technology



## Innovative postgraduate programmes

**MSc Sustainability and Adaptation**

**MSc Sustainability and Adaptation Planning**

**MSc Sustainability and Adaptation in the Built Environment**

**MSc Sustainability in Energy Provision and Demand Management**

**Part II in Sustainable Architecture**



 Centre for Alternative Technology  
Canolfan y Dechnoleg Amgen

**Graduate school**  
of the **Environment**

01654 705953

[study@cat.org.uk](mailto:study@cat.org.uk)

<http://gse.cat.org.uk>

## **MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE CHANGE IN THE SETTING OF THE MALVERN HILLS AONB – a DRAFT JAC POSITION STATEMENT**

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#### **Recommendation**

- 1. The Committee is recommended to discuss and endorse the proposed Position Statement**

#### **Introduction**

2. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England and Wales are conserved and enhanced. In policy terms they have the same planning status as National Parks.

3. The Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) is the body responsible for coordinating, on behalf of the constituent local authorities, the management of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The principal purpose of the JAC is to enable the relevant local authorities, 'acting jointly', to fulfil their duties under Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Malvern Hills AONB.

#### **Purpose**

4. This Position Statement is intended to provide guidance to local planning authorities, landowners, developers, Parish and Town Councils and other interested parties in connection with the need to consider the impacts on the AONB of development and land management proposals which lie outside it but within its 'setting'.

5. The Position Statement has been produced because of growing pressure for development in these areas. For example, the area of land approved for housing in the setting of the English AONBs increased nine-fold between 2012 and 2017, with 60% of this on greenfield land.<sup>1</sup> The towns of Malvern and Ledbury – which fringe parts of the Malvern Hills AONB boundary - are subject to considerable development pressure with some 1500 new houses the subject of current<sup>2</sup> planning applications in the setting of the AONB around Ledbury alone. The Position Statement also reflects land uses changes such as an increase in the use of plastic and fleece used in agricultural operations outside of the AONB, including some distance from its boundary.

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<sup>1</sup> CPRE (2017) Beauty betrayed: how reckless housing development threatens England's AONBs

<sup>2</sup> September 2019

6. This Statement aims to clarify and expand upon issues raised in the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and seeks to assist in the implementation of that plan, in particular with reference to the special qualities of the AONB, the significance of the setting of the AONB and a number of key issues and plan policies as set out in Appendix 1 to this Position Statement. It also seeks to reflect key changes in national and local guidance which have been introduced since the Management Plan was adopted.

### **The setting of the Malvern Hills AONB**

7. The setting of the Malvern Hills AONB can be defined as the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design could be considered to have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB and/or on peoples' enjoyment of it. In terms of landscape character it can be considered to include the area outside the AONB whose character compliments that of the AONB, either through similarity or contrast. In terms of views it can be considered to include those areas which are visible from the AONB and which offer views towards it (i.e. are intervisible). The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan lists dramatic scenery and spectacular views as one of the area's special qualities. In a recent visitor survey 48% of all respondents cited the 'beautiful/great views' when asked what they particularly liked about the area, making it the most popular response.<sup>3</sup>

8. It is inevitable that the Malvern Hills themselves provide much of the focus in any discussion on setting. The Hills form a highly distinctive and iconic feature in the region and exert a strong and widespread influence on the landscape in all directions. They are the most visited part of the AONB and the views they afford are highly valued. However, the setting of the AONB exists all the way around the designated landscape, including those areas which are less obvious and less visited.

9. The setting of the Malvern Hills AONB has not been defined geographically by a line on a map and such a line would probably be all but impossible to draw. The extent of the setting of the AONB varies depending on the nature and location of the change being proposed. For example, a very tall, prominent structure with moving parts such as a tall wind turbine which is visible from high ground may be considered to be in the setting of the AONB even if it is many kilometres from the AONB boundary. By contrast, a much smaller, discrete development close to the edge of the AONB may have little impact. However, a similar sized development in the same location which is brightly coloured and/or highly reflective of sunlight may have an impact on the special qualities of the AONB and/or peoples' enjoyment of the area.

### **Legislation, National Policy Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance**

10. No legislation makes a direct reference to the setting of designated landscapes. However, Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) 2000 Act imposes a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB '...in exercising or performing any functions

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<sup>3</sup> Malvern Hills and Commons Visitor Survey 2018, The Research Solution 2018

in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB'. The words 'so as to affect' in this context include, in our consideration, developments of significance in the setting of the AONB.

11. The National Policy Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) constitutes government policy for England and how this is expected to be applied by local planning authorities and decision-takers in drawing up plans and in determining applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a range of measures through which planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Whilst these do not directly allude to the setting of designated landscapes they do refer to 'valued landscapes' (which are undefined) as well as to the need to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, takes into account the potential sensitivity of the site and the wider impacts that could arise from development.

12. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) supports the NPPF and adds further context to it. It is intended that these two documents are read together. NPPG for the Natural Environment makes clear that, whilst AONB Management Plans do not form part of the statutory development plan they do help to set out the strategic context for development. They provide evidence of the value and special qualities of these areas, provide a basis for cross-organisational work to support the purposes of their designation and show how management activities contribute to their protection, enhancement and enjoyment. Further, it states that they may contain information which is relevant when preparing plan policies, or which is a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

13. Recent changes to National Planning Practice Guidance introduced in July 2019 make direct reference to the setting of designated landscapes, as follows.

*'How should development within the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be dealt with?*

*Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.'*

Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721

Revision date: 21/07/2019

## **Examples of adverse impacts on the setting of the Malvern Hills AONB**

14. Examples of adverse impacts on the setting of the Malvern Hills AONB could include:

- development which would have a disruptive visual impact on views out of the AONB, into the AONB or between parts of the AONB, including consideration of the cumulative effect of several similar forms of development;
- loss of tranquillity through the introduction or increase of lighting and or noise (including consideration of the cumulative effect of several similar forms of development);
- other environmental impact and forms of pollution like dust;

- introduction of abrupt change of landscape character (including the addition of tall structures, masts, wind turbines etc);
- loss or harm to heritage assets and natural landscape, particularly if these are contiguous with the AONB;
- impact on special associations and interrelationships of settings (for example between the Malvern Hills AONB and Bredon Hill or the Cotswolds Escarpment);
- change of use of land where of a significant enough scale to cause harm to landscape character;
- development individually or cumulatively giving rise to significantly increased traffic flows to and from the AONB (resulting in loss of tranquillity and erosion of the character of rural roads and lanes);
- inappropriate use of external materials, external colours, reflective surfaces, and inappropriate landscaping.

### **Conserving and enhancing the Malvern Hills AONB and its setting**

15. A number of measures can be taken to ensure that development in the setting of the Malvern Hills AONB does not impact on the natural beauty, special qualities and/or enjoyment of the designated area. Some measures are a legal requirement or relate to the discharge of local policies. The Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee supports the following:

- Introduce policies in statutory plans, including Core Strategies and Neighbourhood Development Plans which protect the setting of the AONB, including policies which seek to protect key views.
- Carry out Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments to inform the allocation of land for development/identify sites which have the highest capacity in landscape and visual terms.
- Ensure that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment work related to potential development in the area around the AONB includes a detailed consideration of effects on the designated landscape itself, as well as on views to and from it.
- Ensure that new development is in accordance with relevant guidance produced by the AONB Partnership, in particular 'Guidance on how development can respect landscape in views'<sup>4</sup>. This will help to ensure that the effects of new development are minimised through good orientation, layout, landscaping etc.
- Ensure the considered use of existing landform and landscaping and the provision of new appropriate landscaping to help screen local views of development which is further afield, including agricultural fleece, polytunnels etc.
- Where new landscaping is proposed ensure it is of sufficient quantity and quality and has a suitable agreed management plan to ensure its long-term effectiveness.
- Avoiding external lighting or, if this is required, ensuring its effects are minimised through the use of 'dark night skies' compliant design and timing switches to ensure it is switched off when not needed. Adherence to the AONB

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<sup>4</sup> Published August 2019

Partnership's Guidance on Lighting could be used to help reduce the effects of lighting.

## **Appendix 1 - Excerpts from the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-24) relevant to the setting of the AONB.**

- AONB special quality - 'Dramatic scenery and spectacular views arising from the juxtaposition of high and low ground.'
- AONB Special quality – 'A sense of remoteness and tranquillity, underpinned by dark night skies and limited noise and disturbance. People feel calm and spiritually refreshed.'
- 'Views are a crucial component of setting, being associated with the visual experience and aesthetic appreciation of the wider landscape. Views are recognised as being of particular importance in the AONB because of the juxtaposition of high and low ground and because recreational users value them so highly. This was confirmed in a visitor survey of the Malvern Hills which took place in summer 2018 when 48% of all respondents cited the 'beautiful/great views' when asked what they particularly liked about the area. This was by far the most popular response to the question, with just 24% of respondents mentioning the next most popular response.'
- 'The extent of the setting of the AONB has not been defined and is not fixed but will vary depending on issues being considered.'
- 'If the quality of the setting declines then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes.'
- 'Without careful management views within, from and to the AONB may be lost or degraded as vegetation grows or structures are built.'
- 'Inappropriate development adjacent to the AONB can influence landscape character within the designation, for example through associated noise and disturbance.'
- Objective LO1 is the overarching objective relating to landscape in the plan, it sets out to: 'Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.'
- Objective BDO1 is the overarching objective relating to built development in the plan, it states: 'The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB and in decision-making on planning applications for development.'
- 'Policy BDP2: Development in the AONB and its setting should be in accordance with good practice guidance including that produced by the AONB Partnership.'
- 'Policy BDP4: Development proposals that may affect land in the AONB, including those in its setting, should protect and/or enhance key views and landscape character. AONB guidance relating to views and development in views should be used where relevant.'

## Appendix 2 – Selected Planning Appeals

A small selection of planning appeals which reference the importance of the setting of protected landscapes in a positive way is provided below.

### Planning Appeal 1

- **Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/W/17/3180531**
- **Oak Tree View, Beggars Ash Lane, Wellington Heath, Herefordshire HR8 1LN (on the other side of the road from the MHAONB boundary).**
- **Change of use of land outside of the village of Wellington Heath from agriculture to a one-family traveller site including stationing of 2 mobile homes, 2 touring caravans, treatment plant, sheds and associated parking/turning/hardstanding and new access**
- **Planning Inspectorate Decision Date: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

The Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal against a refusal to grant planning permission. Selected excerpts from the appeal decision are as follows:

‘Although the site is not within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), it lies immediately adjacent to it and the AONB Management Plan recognises the importance of protecting views, and sets out specific policies addressing the protection of the setting of the AONB. These include Policies BDP1 and BDP2. While the site may not benefit from the statutory duties afforded to AONBs, nonetheless its role in the setting of the AONB must be considered and, as set out in the Framework, great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty.’

‘Although adjacent to the village welcome sign, the site is well separated from the village with only a few sporadic properties visible on higher land. It reads as open countryside with a distinctly rural character, and is a component of an important wider landscape that provides a setting for both the AONB and the village. Importantly, it is part of a landscape that is not degraded by the commercial activities to the edge of Ledbury or the fruit farming to the west.’

‘My own observation and the evidence supporting the NP lead to a conclusion that this is an important and sensitive landscape, contributing to the setting of the village and the AONB.’

‘I must consider the development plan as a whole and the proposal would conflict with Policies LD1 and SS6 of the Core Strategy. These policies seek development that is influenced positively by the character of the landscape and which conserves and enhances the scenic beauty of important landscapes and those environmental assets that contribute to distinctiveness.....Due to the sensitivity of the landscape here and the scale and nature of the development, I give this harm substantial weight.’

‘I have found that the use of the land as a residential caravan site of this scale would have a substantial adverse effect on the character and the appearance of the area here, which I have found to be a sensitive and important landscape contributing to the setting of the village and the adjacent AONB. Consequently, the development would conflict with Core Strategy Policies LD1 and SS6 in this regard and I have attached substantial weight to this harm.’

## Planning Appeal 2

- **Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/W/15/3007972**
- **Land off Shakespeare Road, Dursley, Gloucestershire**
- **The proposal is for the development of up to 100 dwellings including affordable housing and open space; creation of new access to Shakespeare Road and internal roads, footpaths and landscaping (the Cotswolds AONB abuts the southern edge of the appeal site and is about ½ kilometre from its western boundary)**
- **Planning Inspectorate Decision Date: 2 September 2015**

The Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal against a refusal to grant planning permission. Selected excerpts from the appeal decision are as follows:

'I consider the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including the adjacent Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

'The appellant has endeavoured to show how the impact of the development can be minimised. Given its scale, I consider its impact on short and medium distance views would be modest. Even so, the scheme would reduce the contribution the site, together with the rest of the valley, makes in framing views of the lower slopes and higher outcrops of the Cotswold escarpment.'

'Despite the modest extension which is proposed, the scheme would consolidate existing development and reduce the gap between the town and the AONB. In my opinion the open character of the appeal site makes an important contribution in restricting the encroachment of the town into the countryside. The development would neither protect nor enhance an area of land whose features are characteristic of the landforms on the edge of the Cotswolds plateau and whose proximity to it contributes to the setting of the AONB.'

'I therefore find that in relation to the main issue, the proposal would detract from the open qualities of the landscape and reduce views to the countryside and AONB beyond the site. As a result the scheme would be contrary to saved policy NE10 of the adopted LP and emerging policy ES7 of the draft LP and objectives in both the NPPF and PPG for conserving the natural environment, including landscapes.'

'I do not consider there is a compelling case for supporting the proposal because the benefits, in my view, would not outweigh the adverse impact on the setting of the AONB and the harm that would result from the development.'

'The scheme would represent sustainable development next to a higher order settlement and provide additional housing which is capable of meeting both market and affordable needs. On balance, however, I do not consider that further housing in this location would outweigh the adverse impact the development would have on the wider landscape in the vicinity of the appeal site. Together with its effect on the setting of the nearby AONB this would be contrary to relevant development plan policies and objectives in the NPPF and PPG. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters, I dismiss the appeal.'

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Specific Contact Points for this report

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## MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2019

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2019/20 – UPDATE REPORT

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#### Background

1. The table below shows the Sustainable Development Fund's grant commitments for the financial year 2019/20. The budget is £22,875.

#### Summary

<b>SDF Budget Report at 18/10/19</b>					
		<b>Budget</b>	<b>£22,875</b>		
<b>No</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Committed</b>	<b>Uncommitted</b>	<b>claimed</b>	
165	Shire Ditch Survey	£3,000			
170	Dog Poo Digestate Analysis (£1,500 to 3/11/19)				
177	Poetry in the Malverns : Ledbury Poetry Festival	£1,159			
195	Barton Ct History		£2,000.00		
200	Arts for the Aged				
202	BCH archive activities	£500			
203	Blind walks.	£1,235			
205	Chase School Trips	£500			
206	Community Transport	£500			
207	Community Walks: Freedom Leisure	£600			
208	Crayfish extermination	£600			
209	Dovecote Repairs: Barton Ct	£2,400			
210	Eastnor School Activities				£487
212	Electric bike/car: Car Club				£500
214	Geosites Maintenance: Earth Heritage Trust	£1,540			
216	Hall electric car charge point: Welcome to our Future	£600			
217	Hollybush Village Hall Restoration.	£2,000			
219	Charcutier		£2,000.00		
220	Hope End Park trees (TBC)				
	<b>Sub Totals</b>	<b>£14,634.00</b>	<b>£4,000.00</b>		<b>£987</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£19,621.00</b>			
	<b>Fund administration at 10% of spend</b>	<b>£1,962.10</b>			
	<b>Total + admin</b>	<b>£21,583.10</b>			
	<b>Variance with Budget (no admin)</b>	<b>£3,254.00</b>			

## **Recommendation**

1. **The Committee is requested to:**
  - a) **Note and comment on the report.**
  - b) **Contact David Armitage with any projects for the next financial year.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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**MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**8 NOVEMBER 2019****INFORMATION ITEMS**

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**Recommendation**

**Members of the JAC are requested to note this information report and contact the AONB Unit if they wish to be involved in any consultations or to receive further information on any of these agenda items.**

**Management Plan ref.  
(abridged)**

**LP2 Restore distinctive  
landscapes and  
landscape features that  
have been significantly  
degraded**

**BP4 Improve  
knowledge and  
understanding of the  
AONB's biodiversity...**

**BP1 – Enhance the  
wildlife value of the  
countryside and  
achieve greater  
connectivity between  
key habitats within the  
AONB and between the  
AONB and the  
countryside beyond**

**Project**60 trees for 60 years

The AONB Unit is working with a range of landowners to plant a variety of trees in a number of different locations around the AONB. This includes hedgerow, field, orchard and parkland trees. The aim is to help raise awareness of the AONB as part of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations but also to shine a light on the different habitats of the AONB and the role which tree planting has in supporting the wildlife and special character of these areas.

Finding Rare Species in the Malverns

The second and final survey season under this project has now been completed. Much new species data has been collected and survey records which had hitherto been hidden have come to light. Data collected is currently being entered onto the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre database and is expected to be used as part of nature recovery maps for the AONB. This has been a successful project, engaging many local people in looking for rare species and mapping their whereabouts with a view to achieving more informed and beneficial management in the future.

Highways Verges Management Pilot Project.

A successful bid was made to the Natural Networks programme (a grants project funded by the European Structural Investment Fund and managed by Worcestershire County Council). Work has commenced to enhance three grassland areas in the east of the AONB: part of the recreational playing field in Malvern Wells, a highway verge in Castlemorton parish and a highway verge underneath Little Malvern Priory (Little Malvern and Welland parish). This is

**FP1 – Encourage the take-up of grant options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB**

experimental work, supported by Worcestershire Highways, and helps to demonstrate WCC's commitment to making Worcestershire a pollinator friendly county.

#### Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The AONB Unit successfully bid to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for an area of land west of the Malvern Hills. The Facilitation Fund is a government supported fund to help people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the natural environment at a landscape scale. Good data on habitats and wildlife is essential, and to that end, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust has produced a series of maps showing where to concentrate our efforts in providing bridges for wildlife.

#### Hope End Park

This is on Historic England's Heritage Assets Register. There are 6 owners of it. Attempts are being made by Historic England and the AONB Unit to get a consensus to produce a plan for the park to conserve its 'Gardenesque' style and these are bearing fruit. Experts on gardens, landscape history, and parks have visited the park and provided opinions on the best way to treat this landscape. A simple map-based plan is being produced.

**BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in planning policy and guidance and in decision-making.**

#### New guidance documents

The AONB Unit has now published two new guidance documents: 'Guidance on how development can respect landscape in views' and 'Guidance on lighting'.

**IP1 Raise awareness of being in the Malvern Hills AONB and the significance of the designation**

#### Images of the AONB

The AONB Unit is working with well-known local photographer Jan Sedlacek to put together a series of postcards and cards depicting different images of the AONB. The aim is to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the designation of the Malvern Hills AONB (the cards will carry some limited information about the AONB). Jan's images will also be shown in Exhibition Walk – outside Waitrose in Malvern – in December.

#### Discovering Dark Skies

Celebrity astronomer Will Gater is presenting at Castlemorton Village Hall on the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> November at an event to celebrate the designation of the first two Dark Sky Discovery Sites in the Malvern Hills AONB. Tickets are available at Eventbrite and are selling fast.

Explore & Read

The AONB Unit's Explore & Read initiative involves us gathering second-hand books about the area or with an area connection and leaving them in public places for people to read and return. JAC members are asked to fish out any such books that fit this description and which are no longer wanted and to make them available to the AONB team. Please contact Sarah Jones if you have any: [sjones18@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sjones18@worcestershire.gov.uk)

**Contact Points**County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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