

A potential Cotswolds National Park

Summary: A progress update

Recommendation: To note the progress update

Officer: Martin Lane, Director

Overall resume of progress since the January Executive Committee:

1. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown hosted a briefing for all 16 local MPs in Westminster on 6 February. The invitation received a high number of acceptances, but unfortunately the briefing clashed with a debate on planning and the green belt, resulting in 5 MPs attending or being represented at the briefing (Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, Nigel Huddleston, Luke Hall, David Drew and Laurence Robertson).
2. Following the briefing Geoffrey Clifton-Brown is to write to Michael Gove, Secretary of State at Defra to advance the consideration of the Cotswolds as a National Park.
3. His office team has also circulated the presentation to all MPs invited to the briefing.
4. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown is also proposing to host a Westminster Hall debate, with strong support and interest signalled by fellow MPs.
5. David Drew MP has tabled a question: To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timetable is for his Department to consider the application of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to become a National Park. [127188] Tabled on: Wednesday 7 February 2018 | Due for answer on: Tuesday 20 February 2018.
6. BBC regional television; Oxford today, Midlands today and Points West, have all featured the consideration of the potential for a Cotswolds National Park in late January / early February, with interviews with Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the Board's Director and various vox pops. The BBC coverage has been positive.
7. Gloucestershire CPRE has developed a Cotswolds National Park discussion paper for consideration by the various CPRE county branches across the AONB. A joint CPRE meeting is planned. The Board's staff have not seen a copy of the paper.
8. A local charity has signalled its support for a National Park and that it would consider supporting the development of a Cotswolds National Park website.
9. Cotswold Life's editor has signalled support via the January edition editorial.
10. Defra are still to release any details of the proposed Hobhouse style review of National Parks and AONBs announced via the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, launched in January.
11. Mark Tufnell, future CLA President and former Board member requested a briefing in mid February on the potential for a Cotswolds National Park given the growing levels of awareness of the idea and that a CLA national committee is due to discuss the Park / AONB review in early March.
12. A National Park paper will be presented to the March Board meeting.

Supporting papers: None