

NATIONAL ACTIVITY AND STRATEGY

Landscapes (Glover) Review 2019

1. Following the Government's response to the Review in January 2022, progress on some of the themes hasn't been as hoped. This includes, for example, amendments to our statutory Purposes and AONBs becoming statutory consultees. Ministerial change, of course, hasn't helped this.
2. It is currently unlikely that any primary legislative change (such as that required to amend Purposes) will happen in the near future.
3. However, there is some activity of significant relevance to our organisation and the Cotswolds National Landscape, that is happening nationally:

Not specific to Protected Landscapes:

- Environmental Improvement Plan
 - The Government published the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) on 31 January, a refresh of the 25-Year Environment Plan published in 2018. The EIP includes key highlights of delivery against the 25YEP goals since 2018, and key actions to deliver these goals up until 2043 (the remaining duration of the 25YEP). Many will be familiar but there are new actions. The EIP will be next reviewed in 2028.
 - Stakeholder response is generally welcoming but there are concerns over its delivery.
 - Board Members have received a briefing note of the goals and targets most relevant to the CNL.
 - One of the key outcomes being a one-year extension to the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme, to March 2025.
 - The apex goal of the EIP is improving nature - *to halt the decline in our biodiversity so we can achieve thriving plants and wildlife*
- National Planning Policy Framework
 - There is currently a detailed consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which runs until 2 March.
 - John Mills is leading the Board's consultation response, as well as leading on the technical input of the National Association of AONBs response.

Specific to Protected Landscapes:

- National Landscapes, Parks and Trails Partnership
 - Proposal 25 of the Landscapes Review (2019) suggested creating a new "National Landscapes Service", but in its response government didn't believe in simply creating another organisation within an already complex governance system, at the cost of great public expense and disruption to the important work of its lead partners.
 - It concluded that national governance reforms should be focused on ensuring that existing partners work together more effectively at a national level.

- They committed to establishing a new national partnership to build on existing collaboration between these partners - National Parks England (and the National Parks Partnership), the National Association for AONBs, National Trails UK and Natural England.
- Defra has been awarded £5.4m for the Partnership (until March 2025).
- Three key workstreams have been identified as early priorities:
 - **Recovering nature** and contributing towards relevant government targets;
 - Promoting **equity, diversity and inclusion** of people visiting, volunteering and working in these special areas;
 - Increasing the understanding, capability and capacity of the partners to attract **private investment** into nature recovery and nature-based services.
- I attend the weekly Defra Partnership Development meetings, as one of two Lead Officers from the family of AONBs.
- Earlier this month I co-facilitated an EDI workshop to identify priority themes that could then be costed and funded.
- Targets and Outcomes Framework
 - Also in the government’s response to the Landscapes Review, they stated that *“new ambitious outcomes will be agreed for the role of protected landscapes in delivering on the government’s goals for nature recovery and climate, aligned with the revised 25-year Environment Plan and interim environmental targets under the Environment Act 2011 and the Net Zero Strategy”*.
 - The targets will cover Nature, Climate, People and Place.
 - The Outcomes Framework will be made up of:
 - Targets – for the contribution of Protected Landscape areas to key national priorities, and
 - Outcome Indicators – for tracking progress against targets and other key indicators from a wide range of datasets
 - Simon Smith, our Nature Recovery Lead, is part of the national group taking this workstream forward.
- Management Plan Guidance
 - A consultancy, Gain Consulting, are currently reviewing Protected Landscape Management Planning Guidance.
 - This will include:
 - the process of review and production;
 - producing the plan;
 - use of the plan and delivery.
 - The principles of the new guidance are: clear and robust; stronger on the duties and responsibilities of others; grounded in legislation and purpose; flexible to enable local distinctiveness; non-prescriptive and helpful; results in clear and consistent plans going forward.
 - The new targets and outcomes framework will clearly feed into the plan.

- Rebrand to National Landscapes
 - A brand agency, Nice and Serious, are working with the National Association of AONBs to lead on the national rebrand and roll-out of National Landscapes.
 - There have been a number of meetings and creative workshops over the past 2-3 months and the thinking is now fairly advanced.
 - Alana Hopkins is on the working group, along with six comms colleagues and lead officers across the network.

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