

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Monday, 11 March 2024
My Ref:
Your Ref:

Committee:
Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership.

Date: Tuesday, 19 March 2024
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Shropshire Room, Craven Arms Community Centre, Newington Way,
Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9PS

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Tim Collard
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Members of Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership.

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chairman)	Sarah Bury
Cecilia Motley (Vice Chairman)	Vacancy
Chris Turley (Vice Chairman)	Matthew Lawrence
Heather Kidd	Wayne Barnes
Hilary Luff	Bill Klemperer
Dan Morris	Robert Harris
Emma Bacon	Jim Bunce
Alison Caffyn	Sue Lee
Rachel Cockett	Nigel Jackson
Adrian Cullis	Carol Griffiths
Sue Manns	Andrew Hearle
Gillian Preece	Hazel MacDowell
Francis Acton	Charles Edwards
Tony Haighway	Jenny Rouquette
Ruth Houghton	Veronica Cossons
John Luck	Nick Read
Steve Pennington	Leo Smith
Sarah Farquhar	

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence

2 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 1 - 4)

The note of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 is attached for confirmation

3 Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (Pages 5 - 8)

This paper introduces the new Defra Targets and Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes.

4 Proposed Stiperstones Super NNR (Pages 9 - 12)

This paper provides background information on Natural England's proposal to establish a landscape scale National Nature Reserve in the Marches area close to the existing Stiperstones NNR.

Andrew Nixon from Natural England will give a short presentation and answer questions.

5 Defra Strategic Activity (Pages 13 - 16)

This paper highlights two recent publications by Defra – the report on consultation which brings to a close the Glover Review of designated landscapes, and a policy paper on the government's approach to implementing the international commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030.

6 Management Plan Review (Pages 17 - 24)

This paper brings forward some topics for discussion to inform content for the Management Plan, building on work by the Partnership in earlier meetings.

7 Update on Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team Funding and Activity (Pages 25 - 28)

This paper updates members of the Partnership on a significant new allocation of capital funding from Defra, and on other aspects of funding and activity by the team.

8 Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Species Conference

To receive a presentation from Rachel Glover, Natural Environment Officer

9 National Landscapes Association Update (Pages 29 - 32)

This paper provided updates on various aspects of activity by the National Landscapes Association.

10 Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust Update

To receive a verbal update

11 Dates of Future Meetings

Members are advised that future meetings of the Partnership will be held on

Wednesday 31st July 2024 and
Wednesday 13th November 2024

All meetings at 9.30am



**Shropshire
Hills
National
Landscape**

Committee and Date

Shropshire Hills National Landscape
Partnership

19th March 2024

Item

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**MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP MEETING
HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023**

9.30 - 11.50 AM

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Local Authorities

Shropshire Council

Cllr Heather Kidd

Cllr Hilary Luff

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)

Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Chris Turley

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member

Alison Caffyn

Individual Member

Rachel Cockett

Individual Member

Adrian Cullis

Individual Member

Sue Manns

Town & Parish Council representative

Francis Acton

Town & Parish Council representative

Tony Haightway

Town & Parish Council representative

Ruth Houghton

Town & Parish Council representative

John Luck

Town & Parish Council representative

Steve Pennington

Acton Scott Heritage Farm

Sarah Farquhar

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Sue Steer

Country Land and Business Association

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chair)

Land Life & Livelihoods

Robert Harris

Long Mynd Adventure Camp

Jim Bunce

Middle Marches Community Land Trust

Nigel Jackson

National Farmers Union

Carol Griffiths

National Trust

Andrew Hearle

Ramblers Association

Charles Edwards

Shropshire Good Food Partnership

Jenny Rouquette

South Shropshire Climate Action

Nick Read

Upper Onny Wildlife Group

Leo Smith

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council
Pete Banford (Culture & Communities Manager)
Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills National Landscape
Team
Phil Holden (Manager)
Nigel McDonald (Sustainable Tourism Officer)
Joe Penfold (Young Rangers Officer)

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially newly appointed members to their first meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence had been received from Gill Binks, Sarah Bury, Veronica Cossons, Ben Holloway, Matthew Lawrence, Sue Lee, and Gillian Preece.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The Chair advised that paragraph 95.1 should be amended to read: -

Members received a presentation from Leo Smith on the work he was doing with various organisations regarding conservation of Curlews in the AONB. The headline points in the presentation were as follows:

Breeding productivity is very poor, largely as a result of predation of nests and chicks. At the current rate of decline, the population will halve in 12 years, and become extinct in 25. The Shropshire population is more than 20% of the estimated population of only 500 pairs in southern England and is therefore nationally and regionally important. The AONB holds more than 60% of the county population. The presentation concluded with a recommendation that the forthcoming AONB Management Plan should include action to safeguard Curlews.

2.2 **RESOLVED:**

That subject to the above the minutes of the meeting of the Partnership held on 20 July 2023 be approved as a true record.

3 Election of Chair and Vice Chairs and seats to Strategy & Performance Committee

3.1 Appointment of Chair

The Team Manager advised the meeting that one nomination had been received for the position of Chair.

RESOLVED:

That Alex Carson Taylor be elected Chair of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership.

3.2 Appointment of Vice Chairs

The Chair advised the meeting that two nominations had been received for the positions of Vice Chair.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Cecilia Motley and Cllr Chris Turley be elected Vice Chairs of the Shropshire Hills Landscape Partnership.

3.3 Appointments to Seats on the Strategy and Performance Committee

The Chair advised that Nigel Jackson, Francis Acton, Heather Kidd, and Adrian Cullis had been nominated to serve on the Strategy and Performance Board and that there were still two vacant seats.

RESOLVED:

That Nigel Jackson, Francis Acton, Heather Kidd, and Adrian Cullis be appointed to serve on the Strategy and Performance Committee.

4 **Appointment of nominated trustees to Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust**

- 4.1 The Team Manager reminded the meeting that the Partnership could appoint three trustees to the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust and that there was currently a vacancy. He informed members that Rachel Cockett had expressed an interest in becoming a Trustee.

RESOLVED:

That Rachel Cockett be appointed a nominated trustee to the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust.

5 **Background induction briefing about the National Landscape**

- 5.1 The meeting received a presentation from the Team Manager which gave an introduction to the history and operations of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and the Partnership and Team.

6 **Young Rangers Creative Evaluation Film**

- 6.1 Members received an update on the Young Rangers project from Joe Penfold, Young Rangers Officer.

7 **Management Plan Review**

- 7.1 Members received the report of the Team Manager which updated them on progress with the Management Plan Review and introduced topics for a workshop session.

The meeting then split into groups for a workshop session.

8 Partner Updates

- 8.1 The meeting received a short presentation from Jenny Rouquette which updated members on the work of the Shropshire Good Food Partnership.
- 8.2 The meeting received an update from Sarah Farquhar on the work being done by the Acton Scott Farm Trust to reopen the Acton Scott Heritage Farm.

9 Sustainable Tourism Strategy - consultation on objectives and draft actions

- 9.1 Members received the report of the Sustainable Tourism Officer which set out the proposed vision, themes and actions for the new Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy.
- 9.2 The Sustainable Tourism Officer reminded members that the Partnership had held a workshop on the Strategy at its July meeting. He advised that this had been followed by a series of stakeholder meetings, and material from these was being drawn together in the new strategy. This would be submitted in December with the reapplication for the EUROPARC Federation Sustainable Tourism Charter.

10 Dates of Future Meetings

- 10.1 It was agreed that the dates of future meetings would be circulated to members once they were agreed.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



**Shropshire
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<u>Item</u> 3

PROTECTED LANDSCAPES TARGETS AND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, National Landscape Team Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper introduces the new Defra Targets and Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes. This applies to the areas rather than to the Protected Landscape organisations, and especially with the new legal duty on all public bodies to ‘further’ the purpose of designation, the targets will need to be supported by the activity of all partners.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided. Organisation representatives are encouraged to consider how their organisations will be able to contribute to delivery of the targets.

Background

Below are summary quotes from the Framework, published in January:

“To support Protected Landscapes in meeting their huge potential for nature, climate, people and place we are establishing ambitious targets for National Parks and National Landscapes. These targets will promote the actions that are most needed to achieve positive changes. They will set the ambition for how we expect Protected Landscapes to achieve 3 outcomes from our Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023:

Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife

Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change

Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

To work towards these outcomes we have identified the EIP targets that we expect Protected Landscapes bodies and other relevant authorities and partners to prioritise and focus on. These prioritised EIP targets are those that:

- are most relevant to National Park and National Landscapes’ statutory purposes*
- have data available at the right spatial level*
- Protected Landscape bodies can influence the progress of, by mobilising partners, including through their statutory management plans.*

The framework builds on new legislation in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act that strengthens how relevant authorities must deliver the purposes of Protected Landscapes. We have committed to take forward secondary legislation that will require

relevant authorities to help develop and implement management plans for Protected Landscapes.

We want to support strategic planning across Protected Landscapes, supporting effective delivery plans to achieve multiple targets. Complementing existing protected sites' management plans, local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) will identify the best locations to deliver actions for nature recovery. They will be an important evidence base to aid effective planning for nature recovery activities as part of the Protected Landscapes' management plans. All public bodies within Protected Landscapes must have regard to LNRS. National Park Authorities will in future have to take account of them when preparing their Local Plan, including the specific locations and actions they propose.

The framework will empower Protected Landscape bodies, relevant authorities, farmers, land managers and other organisations to work together in planning and targeting resources and activity. This will improve outcomes at a local and national level. The Protected Landscapes Partnership will have an important role in identifying areas for joint working across landscapes, promoting rural growth through green financing initiatives, and sharing learning and best practice.

The Protected Landscape targets are non-statutory and create a shared ambition for all 44 of England's Protected Landscapes. The targets are for the Protected Landscapes as places (the geographic area covered by the designation). Action will be coordinated by Protected Landscape bodies through their statutory management plan. It will be the responsibility of all stakeholders, partners and land managers in the area to support their delivery.

Thriving plants and wildlife targets:

1. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).
2. Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.
3. For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.
4. Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.
5. Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change targets:

6. Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.
7. Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.
8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment targets:

9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme (see Appendix 1).
10. Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.

Embedding targets into statutory management plans

National Park Authorities and National Landscape Partnerships and Conservation Boards (Protected Landscape bodies) should incorporate the targets into their statutory management plans. Targets set a high level of ambition for Protected Landscapes. However, we believe the ambition is achievable based on:

- *the available baseline data*
- *opportunity mapping*
- *trajectory information derived from policy and project analysis.*

For some targets, including habitat creation, tree canopy cover and protected sites condition, the data shows that the potential to affect change within Protected Landscapes is greater than across the rest of the country. As such, we have set a higher level of ambition for Protected Landscapes to deliver on our national targets.

Natural England will work with individual Protected Landscape bodies to apportion the targets set out in our targets and outcomes framework appropriately between them, based on local circumstances including potential partner contributions and other evidence. Apportioned targets will be agreed between individual Protected Landscapes and Natural England within 18 months of publication of the Targets and Outcomes Framework.”

Commentary

The targets represent quite a significant change of culture for protected landscapes. This should be positive, but in some public services an over-emphasis on certain numerical metrics has not always been helpful for overall effectiveness of delivery. Discussion among the National Landscapes family has highlighted that the targets do not cover all aspects of work which teams undertake. Also there are some topics in the targets in which National Landscape teams themselves may not have typically had much direct role to date (e.g. SSSI condition), so the role of partner organisations will be very important.

We are to be provided by Natural England with baseline data against each of the indicators at the end of April. The apportionment process for targets 1, 7 and 8 will be led by Natural England, supporting us as protected landscape bodies to set our share of the target and incorporate these into our management plan.

The targets have a strong focus on nature. The document explains that targets have not been set for water quality or climate change adaptation but these are also topics relevant to protected landscapes and on which action is expected, co-ordinated with the broader processes on these topics. The net zero target obviously encompasses a very wide scope of emissions sources and therefore potential activities to reduce these. The Access for All metrics (shown in Appendix 1 have much more focus on physical access than on broader aspects of engagement).

A first consideration of incorporating the new targets into the management plan is included within the paper for item 6.

List of Background Papers

Targets and Outcomes Framework published 31st January 2024.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework#:~:text=The%20framework%20provides%20a%20mechanism,economy%20and%20its%20rural%20communities>

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Access for All programme metrics

Appendix 1 Access for All programme metrics:

- metres of accessible path as a percentage of total path
- number of accessible toilets and rest stops
- number of disability accessible parking spaces
- number of accessible gates and gaps
- number of visits and volunteer days facilitated by new equipment
- number of schools engaged (primary and secondary) both inside and outside the Protected Landscape boundary
- number of volunteer days
- number of accessible or easy access routes for which wayfinding has been created or improved
- policies in place to ensure Protected Landscapes are taking positive action to widen the diversity of their staff, boards and volunteers



**Shropshire
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PROPOSED STIPERSTONES SUPER NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, National Landscape Team Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper provides background information on Natural England's proposal to establish a landscape scale National Nature Reserve in the Marches area close to the existing Stiperstones NNR. If progressed this would be managed by a partnership of landowning organisations who work together to improve their land for nature and wildlife. The proposal is still in early development, identifying potential partners and undertaking consultations. Andrew Nixon from Natural England has provided the information in this paper and at the meeting will give a short presentation and answer questions.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the information provided and offer perspectives on the proposal.

Background

A large National Nature Reserve that is managed by multiple partners is sometimes referred to as a 'super' National Nature Reserve (sNNR). Super National Nature Reserves are a relatively new concept with only a few examples in the country. The first was the Purbeck Heaths sNNR which was declared in 2020 <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/purbeck-heaths-national-nature-reserve/>, and most recently the Mendip Hills was declared at the end of 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkmpv88Pg94>. There are a number of other examples around the UK including the Somerset Wetlands. Protected landscapes have played an instrumental role in the development of many sNNRs.

A sNNR is created through the declaration of new areas of land as National Nature Reserve (NNR) within a given locality. The land doesn't all have to be in one large contiguous block but parcels do need to be close to each other within the landscape and can be in multiple ownerships. The landowners then work together to manage this wider body of NNR land in a consistent way that it more beneficial to wildlife and people.

The land that is declared as National Nature Reserve is done so with the permission and consent of the landowners. There is no requirement or desire to include land that does not have the full support of the landowner. The landowners of the NNR would need to be prepared to manage their land for nature in the long term, ideally a minimum of 30 years,

and will need to become a Natural England 'approved body' if they are not already. Currently, potential landowning partners in the Stiperstones proposal include the National Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Forestry England, Shropshire County Council, Natural Resources Wales and Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust. All at this stage are interested in being part of the NNR but it is still early in the process and the landholdings will likely change through the confirmation process. Collectively this would significantly increase the area of NNR land in the Stiperstones landscape.

<p>List of Background Papers None</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>
<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal A community consultation meeting was held on 7th February 2024 at Snailbeach Village Hall.</p>
<p>Appendices Appendix 1 Proposed Stiperstones Super NNR Frequently Asked Questions Document</p>



Marches super National Nature Reserve Frequently Asked Questions

What does 'super' National Nature Reserve mean?

Natural England is proposing a plan to create a large National Nature Reserve in Shropshire. It will be managed by partner organisations who work together to improve the land for nature and wildlife. A large National Nature Reserve that is managed by partners is sometimes referred to as a 'super' National Nature Reserve.

Has this been done before?

Yes, there are a few examples around the country. The first was the Purbeck Heaths in Dorset. Other examples include the Somerset Wetlands and the Mendip National Nature Reserve in Somerset.

What is the area it will cover?

This depends on which landowners want to participate. Currently there are a number of partner organisations that could potentially include their land. Examples include Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire County Council, and the National Trust but this could change as we move through the process. The current Stiperstones NNR (National Nature Reserve) is 442 Hectares. If all partners come on board, we calculate it could be as much as 5000 Hectares and includes land over the border in Wales.

Why can't I see a map?

Currently the area of land that will be included in the NNR is uncertain. It depends on which landowners choose to take part. As a result, the situation is always changing, and any map will quickly become out of date. As the process progresses, and we are more confident on what land might be included, we will be able to provide maps.

What are the advantages of a sNNR?

It will raise the profile of nature conservation and provide a platform for landowners to work together to achieve largescale nature recovery, for example we can agree joint approaches, share ideas and resources etc. It may help in developing funding bids for large scale opportunities in the future

Will this limit what I can do on my land?

Only if you choose to be a part of the NNR. Becoming part of the NNR is entirely voluntary. It requires commitment to manage the land primarily for nature conservation for 30 years, so if you decide to become part of the sNNR then you would need to be approved and commit to managing your land primarily for nature conservation.

Will there be an impact if my land adjoins the sNNR?

You may see some changes on the land in the NNR if management practices are changed, however these will only be on land with-in the sNNR and there should not be any impacts on adjoining land. A National Nature Reserve declaration itself does not impose any constraints on surrounding land with regards to land use or development. It is possible this might not always be the case should there be any changes to national policy.



Will access rights be affected on land included in the NNR?

All statutory Public Rights of Way and open access land will remain unaffected by the changes. Declaring land as NNR does not bring any additional public access or restrictions and access to the land will continue to be at the discretion of the individual landowners.

Will this mean more visitors to the area?

if it goes ahead the sNNR may raise awareness of the area, although its profile is already high so we do not anticipate this to be significant. This may bring positive benefits for the local economy but could also create additional pressure on sensitive habitats and local facilities such as car parks. One of the benefits of the sNNR is that we can work together with others to ensure visits and recreational pressures is well managed.

How is this being funded?

Being an NNR does not bring direct additional funding, although being a partnership should increase the possibility of securing funding in the future from schemes such as Landscape Recovery. The partnership is dependent on partners giving some of their time voluntarily. Natural England will lead the process using a small amount of our staff time. One advantage of a sNNR is sharing resource and ideas across partners so overall we would hope this is a more efficient way of working.

How can I find out more and keep up to date?

Natural England will post information and updates on the Stiperstones Nature Reserve Facebook Page. If you want to more, you can contact the West Midlands Natural England Team on west.midlands.enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

How long will it take?

If the initiative proceeds Natural England are working towards a date in 2025.



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<u>Item</u> 5

DEFRA STRATEGIC ACTIVITY - CONCLUSION OF LANDSCAPES REVIEW, AND 30 BY 30

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, National Landscape Team Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper highlights two recent publications by Defra – the report on consultation which brings to a close the Glover Review of designated landscapes, and a policy paper on the government’s approach to implementing the international commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the information provided.

Landscapes Review

On 29th November 2023 the government published the outcome of the consultation it launched in January 2022 in response to the Landscapes Review. This stage effectively brings to a close the process of the Landscapes Review initiated in 2018, and the ‘once in a generation’ opportunity this represented. While there has undoubtedly been some progress and National Landscapes are now in a better position overall, the uptake by government of the review’s recommendations has been partial.

Some of the actions are still ongoing, including:

- Rebranding as National Landscapes
- Statutory guidance on the new duty to ‘further’ the purpose of designation
- Work on a new funding formula for protected landscapes

The possibility of statutory consultee status in planning for National Landscape bodies is not currently being taken forward but is still under discussion. The situation is the same for the possible strengthening of the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance and a possible second statutory purpose for connecting people to places – these received majority support in the consultation but there is no current legislative vehicle. It is understood however these are not ruled out longer term.

Funding is covered in agenda item 7.

30 by 30

The government have committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030. On 9th December 2023 they published a document setting out:

- criteria setting out how land can contribute towards 30 by 30 in England
- an indicative map - showing the areas which can already count, and broad areas with potential to contribute towards 30 by 30 in the future (the latter includes National Landscapes)
- how government will work with stakeholders to develop additional guidance on how land can contribute towards 30 by 30.

A key point to note is that protected landscapes (making up around 25% of England) will not in their entirety count towards 30 by 30, as not all of the land meets the threshold of being effectively protected and managed for biodiversity conservation.

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23) sets out the approach to delivering 30 by 30 on land in England by:

1. Strengthening: ensure effective policy and statutory safeguards and powers are in place to improve management for nature, prevent degradation and ensure appropriate access for people.
2. Extending and creating: designate new protected areas and restore or create wildlife rich habitat outside of these
3. Investing: invest in habitat restoration across our protected areas and beyond.

Commentary drawing on National Landscapes Association paper

There are two components required for a 30 by 30 framework - Protected Areas and 'Other Area-based Effective Conservation Measures' (OECMs). In this system, National Landscapes are Protected Areas which won't count in their entirety towards 30 by 30, but which have components that do. The mechanism for defining which parts of Protected Areas may contribute to 30by30 is as yet unclear. As an illustrative exercise, the National Landscapes Association has calculated that the area of deciduous woodland areas and non-woodland priority habitats makes up 30% of land across all 34 National Landscapes in England. This would appear to mean that the target could be quite challenging to meet at a national level if a meaningful threshold level is set.

30 by 30 is a valuable tool but needs to be supported and connected by other nature recovery work that might not fit the 30 by 30 criteria, for example Curlew conservation in agricultural areas. To focus attention, energy and resources too singularly on 30 by 30 would be a high risk for nature. In the UK and many other parts of the world Protected Landscapes will play a vital role in nature recovery. Here, an entire National Landscape or National Park should not count towards 30 by 30, but significant portions should, and these should be embedded in wider nature-friendly practices and management to ensure a landscape that is ecologically connected, viable and resilient to climate change.

List of Background Papers

Email to Partnership members 30th November 2024.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-implementing-the-review/outcome/implementing-the-landscapes-review-summary-of-responses>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65807a5e23b70a000d234b5d/Delivering_30by30_on_land_in_England.pdf

National Landscapes Association working paper on 30 by 30

<https://national-landscapes.org.uk/evidence-based-landscape-approach-to-30-by-30>

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

None

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**Shropshire
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<u>Item</u> 6

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, National Landscape Team Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper brings forward some topics for discussion to inform content for the Management Plan, building on work by the Partnership in earlier meetings.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the topics raised and input to discussions.

Background

The Partnership has held discussions to progress the Management Plan review at its meetings during 2023:

- 23rd March – identification of key issues
- 20th July – workshop on content ideas for new plan vision
- 23rd November - workshop on 3 topics: Land Management, Planning, Community & enjoyment.

The team continue to move forward the plan review process and an on-line survey of public opinion is about to be launched. Due to the launch of the Targets and Outcomes Framework and imminent receipt of new data, we have paused work on data gathering related to the old key indicators, which are now effectively superseded.

The information gathering exercise from partners is continuing, and any Partnership members are still welcome to make written contributions on the following:

- Evidence and influences – any key relevant recent reports, data, strategies, policies.
- The current plan - which sections of the current Plan have been the most useful, which you think need updating or changing and how, and any topics on which you think policies or guidance should be added.

Discussion for this meeting will focus on three areas:

1. First thoughts about the new targets and what incorporating them into the Management Plan might mean are shown in Appendix 1.
2. The parallel process of Sustainability Appraisal of the Management Plan requires the useful stage of identifying potential conflicts between Management Plan policies and other environment, social and economic objectives, and how the conflicts may be

minimised. Draft text setting this out is given at Appendix 2 for comment and discussion.

3. A couple of contrasting examples of Management Plan Visions from the Cotswolds and Cornwall National Landscapes are given in Appendix 3 for comment.

<p>List of Background Papers</p> <p>Agenda item and papers on Management Plan Review at Partnership meetings 23rd March and 20th July 2023.</p> <p>Current Management Plan 2019-24 https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/a-special-place/aonb-management-plan</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal</p> <p>The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal</p> <p>The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal</p> <p>Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>
<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal</p> <p>The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.</p>
<p>Appendices</p> <p>Appendix 1 Initial thoughts on the new targets and the Management Plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 Draft analysis of potential conflicts from Sustainability Appraisal process</p> <p>Appendix 3 Example visions from other National Landscape Management Plans</p>

Appendix 1 Initial thoughts on the new targets and the Management Plan

Target (précis)	Notes/ implications
1. Restore/create >250,000ha of wildlife-rich habitats by 2042.	National target to be apportioned. Most likely habitats in the Shropshire Hills are heathland, woodland, meadows and grassland, ponds and wetland, river corridors. Definition of 'restore' matters.
2. 80% of SSSIs into favourable condition by 2042.	Presumably % by area rather than % of number of sites? Requires long term planning for 2042 target date. Natural England have lead role.
3. 60% of SSSIs having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by Jan 2028.	Short term target linked to 2 above. Natural England have lead role.
4. Continued favourable management of all existing priority habitat outside SSSIs and include restored/created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.	Complicated wording based on not going backwards where progress has been made. A good aim, but where work has been grant supported its long term is not guaranteed. Unsure that condition monitoring of all priority habitat is in place to provide data for this?
5. 65 - 80% of land managers adopting nature friendly farming on >10 -15% of their land by 2030.	Definition of 'nature-friendly farming' needed. Presumably doesn't necessarily mean no production on these areas. Depending on definition, some farmers are likely to achieve much higher % of land than this.
6. Net greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.	A standard target from national scale down but hugely challenging. Many aspects including travel patterns/choices of residents. Data has not been cut to National Landscapes to date but presumably will be from now.
7. Restore c130,000 hectares of peat by 2050.	National target to be apportioned. This probably means deep peat, of which we have only 40ha recorded so our share of the target would be very small.
8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover by 3% of total land area by 2050.	National target to be apportioned. Some landscapes aren't suitable for much increased tree cover but ours is, if done in the right ways. Historically, new woodland creation has been quite low in the Shropshire Hills however due to value of farmland. Recent afforestation proposals by Forestry England are a new pattern.
9. Improve and promote accessibility and engagement for all (using Access for All metrics).	The metrics have a strong focus on physical access with not much on engagement of other under-served groups. Important role of countryside site providers. Interesting that this is included when a second statutory purpose for National Landscapes about people is not being progressed.
10. Fewer nationally designated heritage assets at risk.	Need data on how many/which are at risk as first stage. Important role for Historic England.

Appendix 2 Draft analysis of potential conflicts from Sustainability Appraisal process

Some of the issues are similar to previous plans, but the context continues to change. This analysis is refined and updated from that in the Sustainability Appraisal for the 2019-24 Management Plan and is draft text offered for comment. These are necessarily brief considerations of large and complex topics which will also be addressed elsewhere in the Management Plan. The italic text at the end of each paragraph is intended to point towards ways in which the potential conflicts identified can be overcome or minimised. The topics fall into two broad categories around:

1. Potential side-effects of protecting the landscape and natural beauty (which protection results directly from the designation), and
 2. Broader issues around environmental transitions, which are applicable everywhere, but play out differently in a protected landscape.
- The policies of the Management Plan are generally **strong for overall sustainability** as well as conserving and enhancing natural beauty, and there are many more positive interactions between issues than negative ones.

The National Landscape and processes supporting it, including the Management Plan, are an important means to navigate some of the key issues for the area towards a sustainable future.

- The high quality of the **environment of the Shropshire Hills is a huge economic asset** which, if sensitively used and not damaged by inappropriate development, can deliver great long term economic benefits. The environmental assets of the Shropshire Hills support many kinds of sustainable economic activities and possibilities, and the quality and direction of economic progress need to be considered.

It remains important to demonstrate the positive economic effects of the environment and of looking after it.

- The high quality environment of the Shropshire Hills and protection of it as a National Landscape contribute to problems of **affordability of housing**, through high demand and limits on supply. Policies enable affordable housing to be allowed where other forms of development would not be. The higher standards, e.g. of design, sought in the National Landscape may add to costs.

A robust system is required to ensure that affordable housing can be provided to meet social needs, but in keeping with the high quality landscape. Potential higher costs may be somewhat overcome by good guidance and economies of scale. Some of the higher costs are more likely to return to the local economy (e.g. through using local materials), with knock-on benefits.

- **Nature recovery and landscape character.** Measures to strengthen the nature recovery network may change the current character and appearance of the landscape but will almost always do so in ways which are positive for landscape quality and natural beauty.

We need to be willing to embrace landscape change which is positive ecologically.

- There is rightly an increased **urgency to net zero** and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (notably this is now included in Protected Landscape targets). This affects every economic sector and part of society – including land management, transport, tourism, planning and built development. Avoiding the most serious effects of climate change requires changes and compromises now, some of which may be sacrificing

short-term benefits but often these changes will bring other benefits. e.g. to people's health from changing diets and more active travel. Measures to reach the net zero target are sometimes perceived as limiting the economy, but there is great potential for sustainable economic progress through these changes, and the costs of not mitigating climate change would be extraordinarily high.

There is a need to plan for 'just transition' where sections of society could be disproportionately affected by changes.

- **There is increased pressure on land** and a risk that a narrow focus on food security creates a falsely polarised apparent choice between food production or nature. Food production is of course important and medium and long-term food security depends on a high quality environment. Maintaining functioning natural systems is important to human needs. To make better land use choices we need to look at the whole food system including eating patterns, food waste, etc as well as land management.

We need to highlight areas of common ground between food production and the environment e.g. soil health. We also need to pursue integrated models and new ideas for land use which improve human health and local food system resilience as well as maintaining nature and functional ecosystems. The simplistic narratives of 'either food or nature' should be challenged with a more positive model.

- **Renewable energy** such as solar and wind generation will continue to pose a challenge in terms of what level of impact on the protected landscape is considered acceptable. Impacts on biodiversity, heritage, landscape and resources also need to be considered. Community based renewable schemes have stronger overall sustainability credentials taking into account social benefits too.

The relative lack of detailed guidance means that decisions will probably continue to turn on case by case merits. All means of reducing carbon emissions need to be actively promoted, including energy conservation, carbon management in soils, biomass and small scale renewables.

- There may be a perceived conflict between **climate change adaptation measures** and measures for climate change mitigation, such as in application of limited resources.

In reality, both are needed. Despite overwhelming scientific evidence there is still work to do to convince some people that the current unprecedented changes to climate are human-induced and that action on emissions by the UK is worthwhile since every country must act if there is to be a global solution.

- There could be a **tension between nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and nature recovery**. For example a narrow view of land management decisions based on carbon alone could lead to actions which are harmful to nature, e.g. tree planting on high ecological value grasslands, tree plantations focussing on fast-growing non-native species.

The climate and ecological crises need to be addressed together by integrated measures.

- As a rural area, many people are very **dependent on transport by private car and some people are very constrained in travel opportunities and choices by cost**. Policies affecting transport and traffic in the area come mostly from national and county policy rather than the National Landscape Management Plan.

Influencing patterns of behaviour will be a long-term process and will require significant investment and commitment to alternatives. There is evidence of the economic and social value of reducing transport, and the level of homeworking is increasing.

CHAPTER 2 - VISION

A COTSWOLDS VISION: A NATIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR EVERYONE

A time of opportunity

The Cotswolds is good for us; we feel better when we are here and engaged with the natural beauty of the landscape around us. In recent years we have been reminded of the intrinsic relationship between ourselves and the natural world – and the condition it is in. We believe the Cotswolds National Landscape offers opportunities for optimism, regeneration, wellbeing, and inclusion.

Challenges lie ahead

We are in the midst of a global climate emergency and an ecological crisis. Our awareness of ongoing social and economic inequalities is heightened. In the Cotswolds, these concerns are as real for us too, and we face significant challenges: climate change; threats to wildlife and habitat; changes to the farming landscape and agriculture; finding ways to deliver opportunities for younger people and provide for an ageing population; and achieving access to, and involvement in, the countryside for everyone – in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourage a diverse range of people to appreciate and care for the Cotswolds.

What can we do, and how should we do it?

To address these issues and begin to make improvements, we need to challenge ourselves. We must avoid complacency, and not adhere doggedly to past beliefs – this will hold us back, and limit how much positive change we can introduce. Instead, we need to embrace new ways of thinking in order to find win-win solutions which both conserve and enhance natural beauty, and serve the people who are here. We will work hard, and in partnership – to find outcomes which offer the most positive benefits and the least negative impact. We will need to demonstrate collaboration and leadership. We will need to be energetic and proactive. We will need to be bold, brave, and confident. Above all, we will need to acknowledge that we can't do it all alone – we want to work with other organisations and individuals to achieve results which benefit all of us, and nature.

The future should be bright

The treasured landscapes which make the Cotswolds nationally and internationally important are diverse in character, as are the people who live, work, and visit here. There is no 'one size fits all' for the future – but we have a greater opportunity than ever before to pull together as communities across the Cotswolds, and to work with each other to harness our dedication and expertise to forge the future of the Cotswolds. This place, the Cotswolds National Landscape, is for everyone, from all walks of life. In sharing it and looking after it, we will continue to create a place that is vibrant, unique, welcoming, and truly special – for people and for nature. We will work towards ensuring that the Cotswolds stays a working landscape, where agriculture thrives and supply chains are secure. Our communities should be connected and diverse, but self-sustaining. Visitors should feel welcome to enjoy being here, confident about access, and motivated to give something back to help look after the landscape. This should be a place where the landscape, nature, and people work in harmony with each other.

The Cotswolds will be a place that will inspire generations of people to look after it – now and in the years ahead.



20 Year Vision

This is the Cornwall AONB Partnership’s vision statement which captures the essence of where we aspire to be in 20 years (2016 -2036).

The Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a national asset, critical to Cornwall’s economy and the wellbeing of communities. The special qualities of the Cornwall AONB are conserved, enhanced and appreciated by all who live, work and visit, inspiring those people to be connected with the landscape.

It is our intention that the status of the Cornwall AONB, as a nationally and internationally important protected landscape – with equal status and protection to a national park, is recognised and understood by all. This includes the landscape characteristics that combine to give the Cornwall AONB its natural beauty, unique identity and sense of place.

Through effective Partnership working the protected landscape plays a crucial role in nature recovery, resilience to climate change and conservation of the historic and natural environment, by consideration of four key priorities:



People



Place



Nature



Climate

Our Primary Purpose is to conserve and enhance Natural Beauty.

With inclusivity at the heart, everyone should be supported to understand the value of the Cornwall AONB. These stakeholders benefit from a protected landscape that provides the opportunity for prosperity, good health and a high quality of life, allowing them to recognise, contribute, and reinvest in the landscape in order to sustain these benefits in the long term.



Lapwing in the mist | Jane Lewarne



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**Shropshire
Hills
National
Landscape**

<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership 19 th March 2024
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<u>Item</u> 7

UPDATE ON SHROPSHIRE HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE TEAM FUNDING AND ACTIVITY

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, National Landscape Team Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper updates members of the Partnership on a significant new allocation of capital funding from Defra, and on other aspects of funding and activity by the team.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the information provided.

Funding

In the government announcements of 29th November 2023 there was some welcome additional funding announced – £10 million of capital funding in 2024-25 for Protected Landscapes ‘to restore wildlife habitats and improve access, achieving more for people and nature’. £5 million of this is allocated to National Landscapes and the National Landscapes Association has proposed to Defra a funding formula to divide this between the 34 areas. On this basis we are expecting to receive £151k. The team have started a process to identify potential projects for spend, and since it is capital and we do not own or manage any assets directly, this will inevitably involve partner organisations. We will look at projects generated from within the team such as the Ancient Woodlands Restoration project, and also at projects co-developed with partner organisations who manage suitable sites in the Shropshire Hills.

Also allocated for 2024-25 is the second tranche of Defra ‘Access for All’ capital, which for us is £69,833. A similar process to identify projects with partners is under way.

2024-25 is the fourth and last scheduled year of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and in the Shropshire Hills we have for the coming financial year an allocation of £1,490,699, of which grants to land managers will make up £1,337,468. This is the largest allocation of the programme so far, but demand and uptake has been rising, and provided good applications continue to come in, we are confident of spending the allocation effectively. Farming in Protected Landscapes has been well received both locally and nationally, and there is an active discussion about possible ways to retain a useful ongoing role for protected landscape teams in land management advice and project support.

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape team’s total projected budget for 2024-25 to £1.974 million, 87% of which is from Defra. The Shropshire Council core contribution of £36,100 (comprising 10% of the core budget and 1.8% of overall turnover) is understood

to be secure. The local authorities' contributions have for some years been roughly 50% down on the expected level, creating a requirement for earned income.

Government are working on a new formula for core funding for protected landscapes (both National Parks and National Landscapes) to feed in to Spending Review processes, and we will have opportunities to feed into this. Following the Landscapes Review, the Defra Protected Landscapes team are very supportive of securing greater resources for National Landscapes teams to enable them to do more.

Team activity – selected updates

Farming in Protected Landscapes – We now have three dedicated staff now working on the programme (Alison Jones, Helen Oliver and Jenny Wakeman) plus support from other team members. Over 100 projects have now been funded in the Shropshire Hills. Allocation of the £1,037,000 available for grants for 2023-24 has gone well. Although some projects have struggled to complete all planned activities due to weather and wet ground conditions in the early part of 2024, some new small projects have been able to come forward so that the vast majority of the grant pot will be spent.

Ancient woodlands restoration – the ancient woodlands project is working on three sites this winter with Severn Trent funding and has engaged so far with more than 26 owners of ancient woodland sites comprising over 150ha.

Sustainable tourism

The new Sustainable Tourism Strategy was completed in December and actions are now being implemented including a new visitor map and the annual Shropshire Hills Tourism Expo on 20th March.

Clun catchment headwaters eco-hydrology survey

Detailed survey work is under way in the upper Clun area on selected land with owners' consent, funded by Natural England and the FiPL programme. The survey has found less significant peat deposits than expected, but is making recommendations for enhancing environmental benefits by re-naturalising hydrology in the headwaters.

Engagement Ranger

Joe Penfold is now working in our new temporary post of Engagement Ranger, continuing the popular Young Rangers activities, as well as establishing new outreach activities with under-served groups.

Stepping Stones

Cath Landles continues to undertake work contracted to the National Trust for the Stepping Stones project, especially support to the Upper Onny Farmers Group, which is developing an application for the next round of the Landscape Recovery Scheme.

Shropshire Hills summer forum and field visits 13th June 2024

The annual summer forum and field visits event will be held on Thursday 13th June, based at Cleehill Village Hall, with visits in the surrounding area. This is an event for Partnership members, those involved with the Trust, Friends of the Shropshire Hills and interested members of the public.

List of Background Papers

The Strategy & Performance Committee papers on budgets and team work programme updates can be made available to Partnership members on request.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

None

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**Shropshire
Hills
National
Landscape**

<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership 19 th March 2024
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<u>Item</u> 9

NATIONAL LANDSCAPES ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, National Landscape Team Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper provided updates on various aspects of activity by the National Landscapes Association.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

Background

The National Landscapes Association (formerly National Association for AONBs) has significantly expanded its staff team over the last couple of years, partly through undertaking work on behalf of the Protected Landscapes Partnership, which has funding from Defra. The Association provides a very effective co-ordination and advocacy role for National Landscapes and works closely with Defra as a trusted partner.

Policy and advocacy

The recent National Landscape Lead Officers (managers) meeting in Birmingham identified the following areas for working up into key priorities for policy and advocacy work by the Association:

- Long term core funding – making the case
- Input to emerging guidance on the new duty to ‘further the purpose’
- What’s next after FiPL? – including role of National Landscape teams in ELMS
- Targets and Outcomes Framework - link to resourcing

Green Finance

A new 3 person team for the Association is looking at opportunities across the National Landscapes family for applications of green finance, and looking specifically for three pilot projects to take forward. They are visiting all National Landscapes and we recently had a useful discussion with them on four potential topics – trees & woodland, peat, biodiversity and water. All these are relevant to our area and will continue to be worked on, but there were no quick-win projects in our area identified as suitable for the pilots.

Rebranding

This has generally gone well and been well received. It is now working through more areas of documents, materials, etc and through support to partners to make the change.

Nature Recovery

The Association employs a Nature Recovery Co-ordinator who is working with teams to support nature recovery aspects of management planning and involvement by teams in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Arts

The Association has been awarded Arts Council funding for a nationally significant project 'Nature Calling' until the end of 2025. The project will include commissioning creative writing inspired by the landscapes of the 'hub' locations, which have been chosen for their proximity to target populations. In addition, local arts producers will be engaged to work with under-represented communities to co-create works inspired by these written pieces. We are considering the extent to which we may get involved in this.

Collaboration structure

The Association is developing a collaboration structure across local teams based on a number of topic-themed Communities of Practice supported by Panels and Champions. Phil is part of the Climate & Nature Panel.

Training and development

A detailed report has been prepared on future skill needs for members of National Landscape teams, based on a survey of existing staff. A learning framework is set out based on the priorities of: access to up-to-date information, training on role-specific skills, support for positive and inclusive behaviours, and spaces to share experience with peers, all supported by an overall commitment to foster and resource ongoing learning and development.

Generation Green 2

The Association is part of a coalition of organisations hoping to be awarded government funding to deliver a new programme of countryside activities for young people who don't normally have the opportunity to do these. We are exploring possible involvement in this.

National Conference 2024

The National Landscapes Conference is being held this year from 2nd – 5th July at Harper Adams University, co-hosted by ourselves, Cannock Chase and Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscapes. The conference's theme is "Changing Landscapes: Changing Minds" and will be focusing on two questions:

- What role is there for natural beauty and landscape designation in ever-changing landscapes?
- What are the different ways of working and resilience needed if natural beauty is to prevail in the contested debate on the value and use of land and sea?

As the Shropshire Hills team we are putting on three field visits on the Thursday: on the Clun catchment, FiPL in the Clee Hills and sustainable tourism in the Long Mynd – Stiperstones area.

List of Background Papers

Further information on the National Association at <https://national-landscapes.org.uk/about> and <https://national-landscapes.org.uk/our-work>.

Further information about the national conference at <https://www.national-landscapes-conference.org.uk/>.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

None

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