



Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Board

22 June 2021

AONB Board Constitution Review

Purpose of the Report

To outline a proposed approach for reviewing the AONB Board Constitution.

Background

It has been some time since the AONB Constitution has been reviewed. The Constitution provides that a review should be undertaken every five years and some inconsistencies have recently been identified which suggest a review is timely.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the AONB Board:

1. Agree the proposed process for reviewing the AONB Board Constitution.
2. Note that the Government response to the Glover Report is imminent, which could assist with the strategic review of the Constitution.
3. Appoint a Working Group consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair, Natural England, one additional Core Member, one of the Delivery Partners and one of the Advisory Members, supported by an officer group, to consider and make recommendations to the Board AGM in September 2021 on any proposed amendments to the Constitution.
4. Once the Board has reviewed and agreed any proposed changes to the Constitution, submit the amended version to the constituent local authorities for approval.

Current Legal Basis for the Governance of an AONB

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, local authorities within an AONB area must ensure that all decisions have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Authority can be delegated to AONB partnerships to manage an AONB and create a management plan for recommendation to the local authorities.

An AONB partnership is advisory and could be:

- a joint advisory committee (for areas with more than one local authority)
- an AONB committee (for areas where the AONB falls within one local authority)

An AONB partnership operates further to a constitution and standing orders agreed by the relevant local authorities which established the AONB partnership.

Process for Review

The process for the review is recommended as follows:

1. A member working group be appointed by the Board to lead on the review, consider any proposed amendments to the Constitution and make recommendations to the Board at its September meeting. If the government response to the Glover report is received, the working group should also consider this.
2. The Director of the AONB establish an officer working group to support the member working group.
3. Any revisions recommended to the Constitution, track-changed to show changes made and with supporting views of the member working group in relation to any changes, be circulated to AONB Board members for consideration and approval at the Board AGM in September 2021.
4. The revised Constitution be submitted to constituent local authorities for approval.
5. The Board to consider the government's response to the Glover report at a later date if it is not received before the Board AGM and make recommendations on possible further amendments to the AONB Board Constitution.

Conclusions

The AONB Board Constitution provides that a review should be undertaken every five years and the above proposals will assist the Board in undertaking this work.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

N/A

Equality and Diversity Implications

An Equality and Diversity screening will be undertaken as part of the process to ensure compliance.

Risk Management Implications

A review of the AONB Board Constitution will ensure the Board is able to continue to conduct business in an effective and considered way.

Next steps

Outlined in the Process for Review above.

Report Contacts

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Sources/background papers

Current AONB Board Constitution.