Item: 2 DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES REVIEW – Response to Call for Evidence

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the progress with the Designated Landscapes Review and tables, for consideration and approval, the response from Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) to a Call for Evidence from the Designated Landscapes Review Panel.

2. **Recommendations**

The Authority is recommended to:

a) note the progress with the Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs): 2018 Review;

b) note the questions set out in the ‘Call for Evidence’ as summarised at Appendix 1 to Item 2; and

c) consider and approve the draft response set out in Appendix 2 to Item 2 as the basis of the Authority’s submission to the Call for Evidence.

3. **Implications**

**Financial:** None at this time. Some of the content of the Authority’s response may if implemented place additional burden on the Authority, however, the Authority’s response is proposing a call for adequate resources for the Authority in order to carry out both its existing and any additional roles.

**Equalities:** The detailed implications of the proposed Authority response have not been assessed at this time. Any changes at a national or local level would have to be equality assessed ahead of implementation.

4. **Background**

a) In January 2018 the government published a **25-Year Plan for the Environment**. It set out to protect landscapes and habitats in England and committed to undertaking a review National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

b) On 27 May 2018 Defra launched the Designated Landscapes Review. The review is led by Julian Glover, a journalist and former special advisor to No. 10 under David Cameron. The Terms of Reference for the Review and the details of the review panel were shared with members at the Annual Meeting in July 2018.

c) Ministers have made it clear that the review will **NOT** propose reductions in either the geographic extent or the protection given to England’s designated landscapes, nor diminish the character or independence or impose new burdens. The Review has therefore been framed by Julian Glover and his team as a way of enhancing our designated landscapes.

d) The review will report in 2019, the year of the 70th Anniversary of National Parks. At the time of writing no detailed programme or timetable had been published,
however, on 10 October 2018 the review panel issued a call for evidence. The details of the call can be found at: [https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence/](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence/). The call for evidence closes on 18 December 2018.

5. **Engagement with the Review**

The Authority has been actively engaging with the early stages of the review, including:

- a small group of representatives (including Tony Gates) held a first meeting with Review Chairman, Julian Glover in London on 5 July;
- members held a workshop, including external partners and stakeholders, to discuss the review on 21 September 2018;
- Julian Glover and Sarah Mukherjee (panel member) visited Northumberland National Park on 4 and 5 October; and
- members held a joint session on the review with Members of the North York Moors National Park during their visit on 24 October.

6. **Call for Evidence**

a) The call for evidence was launched as an online survey (see link above) and is open to all individuals and organisations who wish to contribute. The questions asked in the call for evidence have been reproduced at Appendix 1 to Item 2 for ease of reference.

b) It is not expected that respondents answer each and every question in the call and for this reason it is recommended, as is the case with National Parks England, that the Authority focus its response at this time to those matters which it particularly wishes to highlight to the Review Panel.

c) The Authority, through the Chairman and chief executive will have other opportunities to address the Review Panel and this may provide an opportunity to explore further those elements we set out in our response.

7. **National Parks England Joint response**

a) During October and November, Chairs and chief executives of the English national parks have met to consider the content of a joint National Parks England response to the review.

b) The approach to developing a joint response has been to identify a small number of strategic level messages which are jointly agreed to be of greatest shared importance by the national parks’ family. The details of this response are being considered and agreed by the Chairs of the English Authorities on 30 November 2018 and feedback on the content of this joint response will be reported to members at the Authority meeting.

c) Key themes emerging in the joint response to date include: bigger and better nature in parks, bespoke farming land management and rural development initiatives in parks, building a national passion for parks, health role, an opportunity for every child to visit a national park and a strengthening of the collective commitment of other for “further” park purposes.

d) Alongside the joint NPE response it is envisaged that each individual Authority will send its own response to the review. Subject to the collective agreement of a joint response we will indicate our support for the collective position on our own individual response. Indeed, there is a very close alignment between the NPE
response and the conclusions of our 21 September workshop, a summary of which follows.

8. **NNPA response to the Call for Evidence**

a) On Friday 21 September 2018 members held a very successful Designated Landscapes Review Workshop attended by 16 external partners ranging from statutory partners, local businesses, community interests and parish councils.

b) After the workshop with external partners, members and members of Leadership Team discussed the priorities emerging from the workshop and agreed a number of key lines to take in feeding in to the Review. The following were agreed:

### Rural development /supporting communities:

- Northumberland National Park Authority would be open to a third statutory purpose, however, only if it brought with it the necessary resources and did not detract from the existing statutory purposes.
- Parks should be a key advocate for their communities (or at least this is a role required in Northumberland).
- Post Brexit role for National Park Authorities should have a role in delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund in the Park (accepting this may be different for each national park – this builds on joint work currently underway to develop proposals for the parks in this area to inform the review).
- Parks should have an enabling as well as a delivery role.

### National Governance/Awareness/Branding

- Need for significant improvement in national visibility and voice for Parks is necessary.
- We do not feel that this needs to be delivered through a separate national body.
- Individual parks to work together on this with a % of national park grant committed to deliver this work.

### Health and Well-being

- Role of national parks and how to use/access it seen a one part of the resources open to a national well-being approach.
- NHS and local health trusts should be encouraged to build links with Parks.

### Resources

- Glover review to be encouraged to have a fresh look at the current Business Model for national parks and across parks.
- Case for an irreducible minimum for Parks to be made.
- Parks to have a role in leading delivery of Environmental Land Management schemes in future (as per our request through the Future of Farming paper produced jointly with other Parks).
**Boundary**

- Defra should be open to boundary reviews/changes.
- Parks should collaborate more with and where appropriate share services/expertise with AONBs.

**Environmental Enhancement**

- Resources should be made available to achieve a dramatic enhancement of the natural environment in our national parks.
- New/experimental approaches to land management (natural regeneration) should be enabled.
- Forestry (given the scale of landscape change it entails) should be made subject to planning control.

**c)** The above represents a summary of key points discussed and conclusions. A full report of the workshop has been previously circulated to members and is available on request. This Authority’s draft response at Appendix 1 to item 2. This outlines the key themes that will underpin the Authority’s response.

Members are asked to comment on these and suggest any additional matters and suggest some possible additions which the Authority wishes to include.

**d)** The draft response will be introduced to members at the meeting and members will have the opportunity to consider and amend it as necessary prior to agreeing it for submission.

9. **Conclusion**

**a)** The Designated Landscapes Review has reached an important milestone. The general public now have the opportunity to give their views on how they feel the current system and operation of designated areas is performing and how it could be improved.

**b)** The Authority can help shape the Designated Landscapes Review by highlighting those aspects which it feels is of greatest importance, and members are therefore asked to consider and approve the direct response as set out in Appendix 2 to Item 2 as their basis of the Authority’s submission to the Call for Evidence.