

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 11 March 2011

Title of Report: High Weald AONB JAC contribution to the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology briefing note "Landscapes of the Future"

By: High Weald AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to note the report.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The AONB Unit has agreed, on behalf of the National Association for AONBs, to contribute a short piece to the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) on how protected landscapes can provide a framework for an integrated approach to the management of landscapes for inclusion in the forthcoming issue 'Landscapes of the Future.'

1.2 POST publish briefing notes known as Postnotes on a regular basis, which are sent to all Parliamentarians and other interested parties. The briefings draw on the expertise of a wide range of organizations from industry, NGOs, academics, regulators and government to provide MPs and Peers with independent and balanced analysis of policy issues that have a basis in science and technology.

2.0 Landscapes of the Future

2.1 Even a cursory reading of policy, research and press articles over recent years suggests that the UK may be on the brink of what could be seen as a rural renaissance i.e. the recognition that landscapes and rural areas can once again provide our essential basic human needs - food, water, energy, trade, community. Although this recognition is perhaps tentative at best, it appears that Government ministers and officials are beginning to understand that landscapes can provide a framework for multi-functional and adaptive land use for the benefit of society.

2.2 This awareness in government reflects (and could meet) the need to develop an integrated and positive approach to the management of England's landscapes and is likely to require the policy and decision makers of the future to take a long and wide view to develop policies that go beyond the short-term.

2.3 This is very much in line with the High Weald partnership's long-held opinion that landscapes are our essential life-support systems, which is articulated by the AONB Management Plan with its emphasis on a multifunctional landscape where the skills and assets of people and the social and economic processes that support them are fundamentally connected to the management of the physical environment i.e. the landscape.

2.4 'Landscapes of the Future' will be published in April 2011. It aims to provide a description and assessment of the challenges to landscapes in the future and to set

out how the different requirements placed on landscapes might be reconciled whilst balancing local and wider public interest.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

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