

Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance

Council – 16 May 2024

Gower AONB – Rebranding Proposals

		This report seeks approval from Swansea Council			
		for Gower AONB to:			
		 adopt the name "Gower National Landscape". recommit Gower AONB to focusing on Nature 			
		Recovery and Inclusivity.			
		This will bring Gower into line with other AONBs,			
		and is part of a national approach to raise the			
		profile of AONBs.			
Policy Framework: Th		The proposals align the management priorities of			
-		Gower AONB with Council and Welsh			
		Government Priorities, and with other AONBs			
ac It		across England and Wales.			
		It supports the delivery of the Gower AONB			
N		Management Plan.			
Consultation:		 Access to Services, Finance & Legal. 			
		• The proposals have been discussed by the			
		Gower AONB Advisory Group, and they have			
		recommended the adoption of the new			
		branding.			
Recommendation(s): It i		is recommended that:			
1) Swansea Council approv		oprove the adoption of the proposed rebranding of			
,	Gower AONB.				
2)	The name "Gower National Landscape – an Area of Outstanding				
2)	Natural Beauty" be adopted.				
		Landscape recommits itself to Nature Recovery			
	and Inclusion, in line with the original designation and purpose of the AONB.				
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Report Author:		Mike Scott			
Finance Officer: Legal Officer:		Peter Keys Jonathan Wills			
Access to Services Officer:		Catherine Window			

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are exceptional landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that they are safeguarded in the national interest. But they are also dynamic, evolving and living landscapes that underpin the economy, health and wellbeing of Wales.
- 1.2 Gower AONB was the first to be designated in 1956, when it was a rural landscape of small fields and woods, wide open commons and a dramatic coastline, surrounded by the heavy industry of South Wales. It was already the busy traditional seaside holiday destination for many people across South Wales.
- 1.3 The vision of Gower as a special landscape protected for future generations remains the same a landscape protected so that it can be enjoyed by all, providing a sustainable future for those who work, live and visit Gower.
- 1.4 But the pressures and threats have changed the declaration of the Climate and Nature Emergencies require us to take action to protect Gower's landscape. The Glover Review (England) and Marsden Report (Wales) have made it clear that the AONBs and National Parks have an important part to play in responding to those pressures and threats, making a number of recommendations for the future.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 In England, the National Landscapes Association (formally the National Association of AONBs) has been working with DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to develop proposals to reinforce our commitment to protecting these precious landscapes their natural and cultural heritage, and to launch ambitious targets addressing the aims of the AONB family.
- 2.2 The intention is to raise the profile of these landscapes, to protect them for the future, and to make sure that everyone can enjoy them. The proposals include:

• For the AONBs to be known as National Landscapes. The legal designation will remain as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but the new name and identity is a powerful illustration of the size and scale of the entire network, with National Landscapes covering 14% of the land area of England and 5% of the land area of Wales.

• To recommit ourselves to protecting these precious landscapes – their natural and cultural heritage.

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We must continue to protect and regenerate our landscapes. They are under threat from climate change and biodiversity loss. We need to help our communities understand the history and significance of our landscapes, to help shape them for the future, to tackle the Nature and Climate Emergencies.

• **To ensure that everyone can enjoy these landscapes.** Bring people together via strong, inclusive partnerships. We want to collaborate on protecting and regenerating our landscapes, while opening them up for all to enjoy.

- 2.3 These proposals have already been adopted by AONBs in England, with a formal launch held on 22nd November 2023.
- 2.4 National Landscapes now have a name which really underscores the vital contribution of these places, and of the partnerships that care for them. The natural beauty of these areas is the sum of their 'sense of place': including geology, climate, landform and species which together give rise to the industry, heritage, culture and language of a place. Together these iconic places form our national identity: from the Isles of Scilly to the Northumberland Coast, Kent Downs to Gower.
- 2.5 National Landscapes aspire to be exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: providing clean air and water, restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing.

3. Opportunities

- 3.1 Although the proposals were originally focused on the English AONBs, adopting them in Wales would have many benefits for the 5 Welsh AONBs:
 - Helping to raise their public profile.
 - Emphasising their part in a national family of protected landscapes.
 - Emphasising their importance in responding to the nature and climate emergencies.
 - Helping to build strong, inclusive partnerships.
- 3.2 The proposals support both Welsh Government and Swansea Council corporate priorities, ensuring that Gower AONB remains relevant and central to future action on nature and climate emergencies, and the needs of both our landscapes and our communities.

The rebranding proposals are supported by Brand Guidelines, setting out a visual identity and tone of voice, ensuring that all the National Landscapes are recognisable as part of a strong national family, who share the same values.

4. Gower AONB Advisory Group Recommendations

4.1 The Gower Advisory Group was briefed on the proposals in detail by staff from the National Landscapes Association in January 2024, so that they

could consider and comment upon the proposals by the February meeting of the Advisory Group.

4.2 At the February meeting of the Advisory Group, the members of the group discussed the proposals, and provided detailed comments. Following this discussion, the group voted unanimously (with two abstentions) to recommend that the proposals be adopted.

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 5.4 The outcome of the IIA Screening is that a full IIA Report is not needed.
- 5.5 The outcome of the screening exercise suggests that the adoption of the proposed rebranding will not have an adverse effect on the people or communities of Swansea, and that it is likely that the application/acceptance will have a low positive impact on them.
- 5.6 The proposals will support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan, which includes proposals to increase the provision of access facilities,

visitor information and raising awareness of environmental issues, and the special qualities of Gower. It will contribute towards the Councils response to the climate and nature emergencies, and will also contribute towards creating a more inclusive Swansea, where access to nature and the countryside is available to all.

- 5.7 The Wellbeing of Future Generations has been a core part of the practices of the teams involved for several years, with our activity and ways of working structured around its themes. These proposals are specifically aimed at addressing climate change and nature recovery.
- 5.8 The cumulative impact of the proposals are seen as wholly positive for the work and reputation of the Council, and for the people of Swansea.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- 6.2 The costs of developing the rebrand proposals, and the cost of the brand design work, has been already covered by the National Landscapes Association and DEFRA. Through our membership of the NLA, we are able to adopt the proposed branding at no cost, in line with other AONBs across England and Wales.

Any branding associated with publications, interpretive leaflets or panels can be addressed as materials are replaced at the end of its useful life.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.
- 7.2 The proposals do not affect the legal designation of Gower AONB the legal designation will remain "Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty", a legal name that we will use in appropriate legal or very formal situations, as it has been since the original designation in 1956.

Background Paper: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Press Release Appendix 2 - Proposed New Logos Appendix 3 - Comments and Recommendations from the Gower AONB Advisory Group Appendix 4 - IIA

Appendix 1 : Press release issued as part of the Rebrand Launch, 22nd November 2023.

"Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Renamed National Landscapes

New name and brand underpin ambitious targets for nature"

Today, [Wednesday 22 November, 2023] all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England are becoming National Landscapes. The new name reflects their national importance: the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that they do.

This is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscapes' vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing.

National Landscapes teams have been at the forefront of delivering natural solutions to the main challenges facing the nation for many years. The new brand underscores their commitment to redoubling their efforts and engaging with a wider audience. In 2019, teams set themselves the most ambitious targets for nature and climate in the sector and continue to work to meet them.

By 2030, National Landscapes aim that, within their boundaries: at least 200,000 hectares of the most valuable natural areas (Sites of Special Scientific Interest or SSSIs), which equates to 1 ¼ times the size of London, will be in favourable condition; 100,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of SSSIs will be created or restored, which is twice the size of Cornwall; and 36,000 hectares of woodland, which is a little smaller than the Isle of Wight, will have been planted or allowed to regenerate. National Landscapes partnerships will also focus on habitat restoration to ensure the protection of some of our most endangered species and increase their work to help more people to enjoy time spent in beautiful places.

Because of their size and scope, National Landscapes are ideally positioned to address the environmental issues the UK is facing. There are 46 AONBs in the UK, covering 14% of England, Wales and Northern Ireland including moorland, farmland, coast, forests, and include UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, a Geopark and International Dark Sky Reserves. They are the UK's nearby countryside - 66% of people in England (44 million) live within 30 minutes of an AONB, and at least 170 million people visit them every year.

John Watkins, Chief Executive of the National Association of National Landscapes says:

'These changes are a moment for National Landscapes to extend a welcome to more people and renew our contract with the nation. Our ambitious aims build

on AONB teams' long track record of successful delivery for nature, climate and people. AONB teams have been working at the forefront of the fight against climate change and nature loss for decades. Since 2000, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships have coordinated habitat restoration projects across many thousands of hectares, restored peatland twice the area of Birmingham, and provided free educational opportunities for tens of thousands of children. We have ambitious targets which we are confident we will surpass, and we are excited about our plans for the future."

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England says:

"For decades the AONBs have helped protect the beauty of our finest landscapes. Today though we need so much more from these wonderful places, helping us adapt to climate change, catching carbon, restoring depleted wildlife and encouraging more people outside, at the same time as producing food, sustaining local communities and enhancing historic environments.

"Modern challenges require new approaches and today marks the beginning of a new phase for our National Landscapes, as they strengthen their existing partnerships, and forge new ones that will secure in perpetuity the huge range of benefits that come from these special places. Big change has taken place during the past 75 years and bigger changes still can be expected during the decades ahead. Uniting the National Landscapes in this way is very welcome and spells immense opportunity and great hope for the future."

Appendix 2 : Proposed New Logos for Welsh National Landscapes

As part of the proposals, a set of Welsh logos were developed to sit alongside the rest of the National Landscape family.



The proposals aim to emphasise that the National Landscapes are a national family, a network of 46, working together to protect our most iconic landscapes, working together with local communities. So the proposed logos reflect that sense of family, while reflecting the individual iconic landscapes.

These logos form part of a detailed set of "Brand guidelines" produced by the National Landscapes Association, aimed at ensuring that the National Landscapes family are all able to show a similar, consistent image across a range of media, reinforcing the image of a family with the same aims and vision, working towards nature recovery and inclusion.

As a member of the association, we are able to use these guidelines to support our own materials and activities, using professionally designed templates and design outlines. This will give us better materials and designs as part of a wider, national family, while retaining a local individual identity.

Appendix 3 : Comments and Recommendations from the Gower AONB Advisory Group

Following the briefing in January, the Gower AONB Advisory Group met on 26th February to discuss the proposals, and to make recommendations to Swansea Council.

A range of views and opinions were expressed (minutes of the meeting are available from the Council website), which are summarised below.

- The National Park brand is widely recognised and well understood the AONB brand is far less so.
- Aligning the AONB with Welsh Government and Council priorities will help to ensure future funding.
- Gower has its own identity and AONB is used by local businesses. How will the proposed changes affect them?
- "National Landscape" reflects the importance of the designation, and will emphasise the links to other landscapes, which will draw more visitors.
- Changing the name will not change Gower, funding for work within the AONB needs to be secured.
- More engagement work needs to be carried out with communities on Gower.
- Adopting the changes can only be positive we have nothing to loose.
- A positive step forward linking to a national recognised brand will strengthen Gower's identity.
- Not adopting the proposals risks being left behind, as others move forwards.
- The proposals are positive, aspiring to make a difference, and showing our ambition. We want Gower to be part of that too.

The discussion and comments have been helpful in focusing attention on how the proposals can be best implemented, and highlighting potential issues. For example, retaining the name and strapline "Gower National Landscape – an area of outstanding natural beauty" is likely to ease the transition, retaining the link to the past name. There is also a need to further engage with communities on Gower, to demonstrate the work being carried out, and to promote the value of Gower's precious landscape.

The rebrand proposals are an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment and ambition for Gower, to publicly recommit Swansea Council and the Gower National Landscape to protect and enhance Gower.

Following the discussions, the Advisory Group voted to adopt the proposed rebranding, by 11 votes in favour, and 2 abstentions.

Therefore the Gower AONB Advisory Group recommends that Swansea Council formally adopts the rebranding proposals, and for Gower AONB to become known as "Gower National Landscape – an area of outstanding natural beauty".

Appendix 4 : IIA Screening Report

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Planning & City Regeneration Directorate: Place

Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?

New and revised policies, practices or procedures

Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff

Efficiency or saving proposals



 \boxtimes

Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning

New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built nvironment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-

environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line <u>ser</u>vices, changing location

Large Scale Public Events

Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation

Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions

Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)

Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)

Major procurement and commissioning decisions

Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services

(b) Please name and fully <u>describe</u> initiative here:

Gower AONB – Proposed Rebrand

This report seeks approval from Swansea Council for Gower AONB to:

• adopt the name "Gower National Landscape".

• recommit Gower AONB to focusing on Nature Recovery and Inclusivity.

This will bring Gower into line with other AONBs, and is part of a national approach to raise the profile of AONBs.

The proposals align the management priorities of Gower AONB with Council and Welsh Government Priorities, and with other AONBs across England and Wales.

The proposals support the delivery of the Gower AONB Management Plan, and reflects an intention to engage with a wider range of communities across Gower and Swansea. We recognise that this will be a journey, rather than something that is quickly achieved – reflecting our capacity as a small team, while simultaneously retaining our focus for action on landscape and biodiversity. Because of this, our engagement is likely to be through other Council teams and community groups (for example, our funding for the Health Walks provided by John Ashley - <u>Get healthy through walking - Swansea</u>).

The original designation as an AONB committed us to "protect and enhance Gower, for the nation" – these proposals are a recommitment to this legal duty, rather than adopting new roles.

Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)

	ligh Impact	Medium Impact	Low Impact	Needs
further investigation				
Children/young people (0-18)	+ •	+ -	+ • ⊠□	
Older people (50+) Any other age group Future Generations (yet to be bor Disability	n) 🗌 🗌			
Race (including refugees)			\boxtimes	
Asylum seekers			\boxtimes	
Gypsies & travellers			\boxtimes	
Religion or (non-)belief Sex Sexual Orientation Gender reassignment				
Welsh Language Poverty/social exclusion Carers (inc. young carers) Community cohesion Marriage & civil partnership Pregnancy and maternity				

Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches?

Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement

The adoption of the proposals is an initial step – once the proposals have been adopted, we will seek to establish links with a range of community groups, taking the links forwards where we and the group feel that we have sufficient common interests. This may be in supporting a community group to engage with Gower, through visiting, or undertaking a range of activities agreed with the group itself. It is likely that we will want to work with the access To Services team to explore how we can best do this.

We will also explore how we can tackle barriers which prevent or impede groups accessing Gower, and will seek to work with them to mitigate these barriers.

The original designation as an AONB committed us to "protect and enhance Gower, for the nation" – these proposals are a recommitment to this legal duty, rather than adopting new roles.

Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:

- a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan's Well-being Objectives when considered together?
 Yes No No
- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals?

Yes 🖂 👘 No 🗌	
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No

- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working? Yes ⊠ No □
- d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?
 Yes ⋈ No □

Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk	Medium risk	Low risk

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?

X Yes

If yes, please provide details below

The proposals demonstrate the AONB teams commitment to respond to the climate and nature emergencies, and to tackling issues which exclude some groups from access to the countryside. The proposals align the management priorities of Gower AONB with Council and Welsh Government Priorities, and with other AONBs across England and Wales.

The adoption of the proposals will support other teams within the Council, as they carry out work on Gower.

Failure to adopt the proposals is likely to result in reputational damage to Swansea Council, due to a real or perceived failure to fulfil the Councils legal duty towards Gower AONB.

Q7 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the

screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?

(You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups/ communities more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making. For example, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

If the proposals are adopted, the cumulative impacts will largely beneficial, supporting plans and policies aimed at responding to climate change and nature recovery, and addressing inequalities around access to nature and the countryside.

In reality, the size of the AONB Team and its budget resources mean that the cumulative impact will be limited – however, it will support the work of the wider Council as it responds to the climate and nature emergencies, and inclusivity, contributing to more significant outcomes.

The proposals are very unlikely to disadvantage any group – the intention is the opposite of this.

Outcome of Screening

Q8 Please describe the outcome of your screening below:

- Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)
- Summary of involvement (Q3)
- WFG considerations (Q4)
- Any risks identified (Q5)
- Cumulative impact (Q7)

The outcome of the IIA Screening is that a full IIA Report is not needed.

The outcome of the screening exercise suggests that the adoption of the proposed rebranding will not have an adverse effect on the people or communities of Swansea, and that it is likely that the application/acceptance will have a low positive impact on them.

The proposals will support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan, which includes proposals to increase the provision of access facilities, visitor information and raising awareness of environmental issues, and the special qualities of Gower. It will contribute towards the Councils response to the climate and nature emergencies, and will also contribute towards creating a more inclusive Swansea, where access to nature and the countryside is available to all.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations has been a core part of the practices of the teams involved for several years, with our activity and ways of working structured around its themes. These proposals are specifically aimed at addressing climate change and nature recovery.

The cumulative impact of the proposals are seen as wholly positive – for the work and reputation of the Council, and for the people of Swansea.

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

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Screening completed by:

Name: Mike Scott

Job title: Gower AONB Officer

Date: 10th April 2024

Approval by Head of Service:

Name: Phil Holmes

Position: Head of Planning and City Regeneration

Date: 11th April 2024