



## Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 2 December 2019

### **Welsh Government Consultation – Draft National Development Framework**

Welsh Government has just (15 November) concluded a formal consultation on the draft National Development Framework (NDF), which will set the direction for development in Wales from 2020 to 2040. The draft NDF addresses national priorities through the planning system, including:

- sustaining and developing a vibrant economy;
- decarbonisation;
- developing resilient ecosystems; and
- improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Details of the consultation are available here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-10/draft-national-development-framework-consultation-document.pdf>

Swansea Council's response to the draft NDF raised specific points regarding Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

#2 An additional policy for the MSWW Region to highlight the future role of the designated National Parks and AONB is also considered necessary, which would lay the foundation upon which SDPs could build. These are highly significant, nationally designated areas, that are a distinguishing feature at a national scale, and the NDF has an important role in identifying the opportunities and responsibilities for these areas. Such Areas provide an opportunity for increasing tourism activity in a sustainable manner and a clear framework should be established in the national plan relating to the fundamental need to protect and enhance these areas as national assets. More broadly in relation to AONBs, whilst there is a scattering of references to AONBs in the document (e.g. p12 Challenges and opportunities talks about living landscapes), generally speaking the conclusions and recommendations of the Future Landscapes work that has been undertaken across Wales are not apparent in the draft NDF. Looking at NPs and AONBs together as the designated landscapes of Wales. AONBs and NPs are nationally important assets, designated for the benefit of the nation and to protect their unique landscapes. Their national importance is recognised and stated in Planning Policy Wales, so the Council suggests they should have the same national consideration in the NDF.

In the Council's view, the Minister has clearly stated the need for parity for AONBs with National Parks (NPs) in terms of status, profile and resourcing, and the Council's view is that AONBs are not profiled in the same way, e.g:

- NPs are shown on the very first plan – but not AONBs;
- NPs get referenced and named in the regional profiles but not the AONBs.
- Whilst both the National Parks and an AONB are identified in the regional profile for Mid and South West Wales, the overview description on p56 only mentions the National Parks.

**Chris Lindley**

**Gower AONB Team Leader**

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