

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**

Date of Meeting: 25th February 2020

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None



Subject: **Special meeting to discuss The Glover Review and possible creation of a National Park in East Devon**

Purpose of report: This report seeks to inform a debate about the potential format and invitees to a meeting to discuss the findings of the Glover Review and specifically proposals for a National Park. The report considers how such a meeting could be run and potential invitees to ensure that Members have input from all relevant parties to inform their debate.

Recommendation: **Members are asked to agree the proposed arrangements for a special meeting of Strategic Planning Committee as detailed in this report.**

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that Members have had input into and are content with the arrangements for the proposed special meeting.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development

Financial implications: No specific financial implications at this stage

Legal implications: There are no legal implications from this report.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Medium Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information: The Glover review and supporting documents can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

Link to [Council Plan](#):
Outstanding Place and Environment
Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
Outstanding Council and Council Services

Background

At the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 22nd October 2019 Members considered a report on the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes in England. The report summarised the recommendations of the review and Members resolved:

1. That members research all of the recommendations of the Glover Report on protected landscapes in England be resolved;
2. To review the Government's response to the recommendations; and note that the Chilterns, the Cotswolds and Dorset and East Devon AONBs are potential candidates for future designation as national parks be resolved;
3. that the Strategic Planning Committee hold a special meeting open to all members to consider and debate the issues regarding the possible creation of a National Park.

At the Council meeting of the 23rd October 2019 Councillor Paul Arnott presented a motion in relation to the Glover Review and Members discussed how to respond to the review. It was resolved:

That ahead of the Government's response, preliminary work be started on formulating the Council's position, through dialogue with all the relevant elected representatives. That this Council agrees that no decision can be made on this issue until the financial and economic implications have been assessed and the Government's position made clear.

Scope of meeting

The final report of the Glover Review is 168 pages long and includes a total of 27 proposals. The proposals vary in terms of their significance and the role that the Council might play and therefore the scope for debate. Proposals such as strengthening the role of management plans and offering every child a night under the stars in a national landscape probably offer less opportunity for debate than others such as creating a new national landscapes housing association to build affordable homes for example. It is therefore assumed that it is not Members' intention to debate all of the report and its proposals in detail although it should be noted that they form a package of measures and should not necessarily be viewed in isolation from each other.

It is noted from the debate and resolutions of both Strategic Planning Committee and Council that it is the proposal for creating new national parks with the East Devon/Dorset AONB a potential candidate is a main issue and therefore that debate would logically focus around this issue. However the meeting should also give an opportunity for debate on the wider issues raised in the review.

Issues to consider

In order for the meeting to progress in an orderly fashion it is considered to be important to identify and agree the key issues for discussion ensuring that an agenda for any meeting can be produced, officers can then prepare appropriate reports on these matters and invitees can be tailored to advise and contribute based on the issues to be considered. As the Council has recently agreed a new Council Plan 2020 – 2024 and this forms the basis for our key priorities it seems logical to structure the debate around how proposals for a new national park would help to achieve the priorities of the Council Plan. Below is a list of potential issues/questions for consideration set out under the headings of the 4 main priorities in the Council Plan:

Outstanding Place and Environment

- Would the recommendations of the Glover Review enhance the quality of life of our residents?
- Would the recommendations help to develop happy and healthy communities?
- Would they help to protect, value and increase our treescape?
- Would they provide additional protection to the landscape and habitats?
- What impact would the recommendations have on addressing the climate change emergency?

Outstanding Homes and Communities

- What impact would the recommendations have on the delivery of affordable and other housing to meet the needs of our rural communities?
- Would they impact on our ability to upgrade homes and introduce energy efficiency measures and renewable sources of energy?
- How would the recommendations impact on the communities within the designated area in terms of social cohesion, services and facilities etc?
- How might the recommendations impact on public health and wellbeing?

Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity and Prosperity

- How might the recommendations impact on the roll-out of high speed broadband and mobile telecommunications to rural communities and businesses within the designated area?
- How would they impact on opportunities for clean growth and delivery of the local industrial strategy?
- How might existing businesses within the area be affected and how might the prospects of new businesses be impacted?
- How might the proposals address issues of low productivity?

Outstanding Council and Council Services

- How might the administration of the areas of the district both within and outside any designated National Park be impacted?
- How would the funding of the area be impacted by the recommendations?

It is considered that the above issues represent the key questions that need to be considered but Members consideration of these and any other issues is sought. Once an agreed list of issues for debate has been agreed it is recommended that a briefing paper be prepared covering these questions under each of the 4 key objectives. The papers would include assessments based on the information currently available and experience elsewhere.

Structure

It is considered that debate would logically be structured around the 4 key objectives of the Council Plan and the identified questions under each. Although these clearly interact with one another and there may be some overlap it is considered to be the best way to ensure that all issues and interests are covered.

A debate on these issues lends itself to a more informal approach to meeting management than would be usual at a committee meeting and it is considered that public speaking rules would need to be relaxed to enable all interested parties to be heard. In order to facilitate this an all day meeting is recommended with members of the public who wish to address the meeting given the usual 15 minutes at the start of the meeting. Invited bodies and groups could then be asked to address the meeting as the relevant topic is to be debated with a reasonable time limit such as the

3 minutes given at Development Management Committee to ensure that the meeting keeps to a reasonable timescale. It is recommended that Members of the Council not be limited in terms of time as is usual practice.

Invitees

The meeting would be open to the public and appear on the meeting programme to encourage Members to attend. Relevant Council officers would also be asked to attend to advise the committee. It is also considered that representatives of other bodies and groups who would have experience of the issues to be discussed or represent specific interests should be specifically invited to ensure a fully informed debate. Suggested groups and bodies to invite are as follows:

- East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONB Teams
- Dorset Council
- Extinction Rebellion
- Live West
- Devon Rural Housing Partnership
- Devon County Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- BT Open Reach
- NHS/CCG
- Natural England
- South West Local Enterprise Partnership
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- National Association of AONB's
- Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Exmoor National Park Authority
- South Downs National Park Authority
- New Forest National Park Authority
- Chilterns Conservation Board
- Visit Devon
- Wessex Community Land Trusts Project
- CPRE
- Dorset AONB Team
- Dorset National Park Group
- National Trust
- Clinton Devon Estates
- Environment Agency
- National Farmers Union
- RSPB
- Federation of Small Businesses
- South West Coast Path Association
- Exeter Centre for Circular Economy
- Forestry Commission
- Jurassic Coast Trust
- Otter Valley Association
- Sid Vale Association
- Historic England
- Axe Vale and District Conservation Society

Members are asked to consider any further attendees or organisations that should be invited to attend.