

Response ID ANON-MW92-FMYH-3

Submitted to Landscapes Review: Call for Evidence

Submitted on 2018-12-13 10:07:33

About you

1 Are you replying as a member of the public or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

2 If you are replying as a member of the public

What is your name?:

(No comment submitted)

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response. We may also use this to contact you further:

3 If you are replying on behalf of an organisation or organisations

Which organisation(s)?:

Solent Protection Society

What is your name and position?:

(detail redacted)

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response. We may also use this to contact you further.:

(detail redacted)

4 We would like to be able to use extracts from submissions in our final report. If you would not like them, potentially, to be made public, please tell us here.

Yes, I am content for you to use extracts of my response in the final report

5 We have obligations under freedom of information laws and there is more information below. For the purposes of these laws, would you like your response to be confidential?

No.

If you have answered yes, please give your reason:

(No comment submitted)

Before anything else

6 We would love to know what makes National Parks and AONBs special to you

Image upload :



Figure 1 The Newtown landing stage and autumn colours

Yes, you can use my photo online or in the report.

Part 1 - Opening thoughts

7 What do you think works overall about the present system of National Parks and AONBs in England? Add any points that apply specifically to only National Parks or AONBs

The Solent Protection Society (SPS) is primarily concerned with the shoreline and the view from the sea as it affects the National Parks, AONBs and the tidal river estuaries that make up the Solent from the Needles to Selsey Bill. We are concerned with the economic, social, leisure and environmental wellbeing of the Solent not just its appearance. Many of these aspects are interdependent and sometimes in conflict. The National Park and the AONBs play a crucial role in safeguarding this special place and seascape.

8 What do you think does not work overall about the system and might be changed? Add any points that apply specifically to National Parks or AONBs

The AONBs hold less clout in the planning system than the National Park and in our view need strengthening to offset the pressure from development, particularly housing targets. The view from the sea is often not appreciated as much as it should be, particularly when this may be the only view that is easily gained of a densely wooded AONB for example.

Part 2 - Views

9 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in nature conservation and biodiversity?

SPS are of course supportive of the role of national parks and AONBs in nature conservation and bio diversity but it is not our primary concern in responding to this consultation. We will, therefore, only answer those questions that are specific to the relationship between the landscape and the seascape.

Could they do more to enhance our wildlife and support the recovery of our natural habitats?:

[No comment submitted]

10 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in shaping landscape and beauty, or protecting cultural heritage?

SPS considers the role of the NP and the AONBs as crucial in the protection of the coastline of the Solent. Indeed we would like to see the AONB designation extended to more of our tidal rivers such as the Hamble, and parts of the western shore of Southampton Water which are under threat.

11 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in working with farmers and land managers and how might this change as the current system of farm payments is reformed?

[No comment submitted]

12 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in supporting and managing access and recreation?

Managing access is an important role for the NP and AONBs and SPS are supportive of the English Coastal Path project, provided it does not adversely impact on the nature conservation areas of the Solent coast. There are many protections such as SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar and others which require removal of the spreading room associated with the proposed path. We would like to see the AONBs take an active part in helping complete the coastal path. The view from the sea of the coastline is an important part of the sailing and boating recreational activities enjoyed by many thousands of people each year in the Solent.

13 What views do you have about the way National Park and AONB authorities affect people who live and work in their areas?

[No comment submitted]

Are they properly supporting them and what could be done differently?:

[No comment submitted]

14 What views do you have on the role National Park and AONB authorities play on housing and transport in their areas?

As we said in Part 1 our concern is that the AONBs do not have sufficient power to combat the pressure for development, particularly for housing on the coastline where demand is high. We have a concern that incremental enlargement of small scale houses and chalets or new builds which individually may not be great but cumulatively start to change the landscape is not sufficiently appreciated or controlled by local planning authorities. The effect on the AONB should have a greater priority in considering such applications.

In addition we would like to see the introduction of smaller area AONBs associated with river valleys when viewed from the river or the opposite bank before such areas of important natural landscape are lost.

Part 3 - Current ways of working

15 What views do you have on the way they are governed individually at the moment? Is it effective or does it need to change, if so, how?

National Parks are their own planning authority with elected members and so have the power to accept or reject development in a much more direct way than an AONB which has a broadly advisory role to the local planning authority. We think the position of an AONB within the LA planning context needs to be strengthened though we do not have any immediate suggestions on how best to achieve this.

16 What views do you have on whether they work collectively at the moment, for instance to share goals, encourage interest and involvement by the public and other organisations?

In the case of the Solent we have a number of LAs and a NP that border the sea, each with its own local plan. We would like to see greater consistency between local plans in the protection of the landscape value of the coastline and tidal river estuaries, based on the highest common denominator. Perhaps some national guidance might help achieve this.

17 What views do you have on their efforts to involve people from all parts of society, to encourage volunteering and improve health and well-being?

[No comment submitted]

18 What views do you have on the way they are funded and how this might change?

[No comment submitted]

19 What views do you have on the process of designation - which means the way boundaries are defined and changed?

SPS is not aware in detail, though perhaps we should be, of the process of designation of AONBs. We have some knowledge of National Parks – the New Forest NP having come into existence relatively recently followed by the South Downs NP. As you will have seen we think there is a case for some smaller designations in relation to river valleys and the coastline. If the criteria at present do not fit this suggestion then perhaps the criteria need to be reviewed.

20 What views do you have on whether areas should be given new designations? For instance, the creation of new National Parks or AONBs, or new types of designations for marine areas, urban landscapes or those near built-up areas.

Since the NP and the AONBs around the Solent were established we now have the South Marine Plan and a number of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) under the Marine and Coastal Access Act. SPS welcomes these designations and the policies contained in the Marine Plan. We have indicated where we think new AONBs could be designated. SPS has also considered whether the Solent should become a Marine National Park, a designation which, as far as we know, has not been used in English coastal waters.

The adoption of the South Marine Plan has, however, put into law many of the policies that a Marine National Park would be expected to have. All it lacks is a single democratic body to administer it and take decisions. This is done by the somewhat remote Marine Management Organization (MMO) and all local authorities are charged with 'co-operating'. We have yet to see how well this works but what we would like to see is a better reflection of the Marine Plan in local plans affecting all coastlines but particularly those in the NP and AONBs. The New Forest NP has quite robust policies even though these predate the South Marine Plan, other LAs less so.

21 Are there lessons that might be learnt from the way designated landscapes work in other parts of the United Kingdom, or abroad?

[No comment submitted]

Part 4 - Closing thoughts

22 Do you think the terms currently used are the right ones? Would you suggest an alternative title for AONBs, for instance and if so what?

[No comment submitted]

23 The review has been asked to consider how designated landscapes work with other designations such as National Trails, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs). Do you have any thoughts on how these relationships work and whether they could be improved?

See the answer to Q20 above in relation to Marine Plans and MCZs. Marine Plans in particular deliberately overlap land based plans and have a number of policies that have to be taken into account when considering changes to the landscape.

The difficulty with Marine Plans is deciding what weight to give to each policy in a particular circumstance. SPS considers that where NPs and AONBs are concerned the protection of the landscape and seascape should be of a higher weighting and this needs to be endorsed by land based planning authorities and the MMO.

24 Do you have any other points you would like to make that are not covered above?

[No comment submitted]