**POSITION STATEMENT ON THE CASE FOR A COTSWOLDS NATIONAL PARK**

**Summary:** To consider a Position Statement on the case for a Cotswolds National Park.

**Recommendation: That, subject to any comments at the Meeting, the Cotswolds National Park Position Statement be agreed for submission to the Glover Review.**

**Officer:** Martin Lane, Director (01451 862000)

**Background**

1. The background and remit of the Glover Review have been discussed previously.
2. The Review will examine and make recommendations on the case for the extension or creation of new designated areas.
3. The discussion as to whether the Cotswolds should be designated a National Park has steadily grown over the last two years, for example:

* Comparison with the South Downs National Park landscape has led to questions as to why the Cotswolds aren’t similarly designated a National Park.
* An online Parliamentary petition called for the Cotswolds to be designated a National Park.
* Local MPs advocated that the case of a National Park be explored and debated, having identified that a Park Authority would have greater regard to safeguarding the quality of the landscape and environment, achieve a more consistent planning policy approach and benefit the tourism sector.
* National organisations such as the Natural Capital Committee have advocated new National Park designations and the Landscape Institute’s President questioned why such a significant, special and well known landscape such as the Cotswolds is not a National Park.
* An increasing number of local communities have called for the National Park designation to be given serious consideration.

1. The Board is aware that the Glover Review will likely receive National Park proposals for the Dorset coast, the Chilterns and an urban National Park focussed on Birmingham.
2. At its September meeting, the Executive Committee agreed the adoption of a new Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 on behalf of the Board. It also agreed that one of the four Management Plan Ambitions should be; “To promote the case for the Cotswolds being designated as England’s next National Park”.
3. As discussed previously, the Glover Review call for evidence only has one specific question concerning new designations or the potential for new National Parks. It is therefore suggested that the Board makes a separate additional submission to the Review focussed on the case for the Cotswolds to be a candidate for England’s next National Park.

1. In mid-October all Board members were issued with a draft Position Statement in order to help ensure that the whole Board was up to date with discussions.
2. An updated draft Position Statement is attached at **Appendix A**. It is supported by a set of Frequently Asked Questions, (FAQs) at **Appendix B** and a Cotswold National Park promotional article written by a local journalist / author at **Appendix C**.

1. The attached are informed by a visit made by Tony Merry, Executive Committee member, to the South Downs National Park Authority in mid-October for discussions with their planning team. The South Downs Park Authority also hosted a visit from the Liz Eyre, Ed Macalister-Smith, George Lambrick, Mark Connelly and Martin Lane on 12th November.

**Supporting papers:**

**Appendix A: Draft Cotswolds National Park Position Statement**

**Appendix B: Draft Frequently Asked Questions on a Potential Cotswolds National Park**

**Appendix C: Cotswold National Park promotional article**