



Kent Downs National Landscape

KENT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN

2024 TO 2029

REG 19 PRESUBMISSION DRAFT CONSULTATION

FEBRUARY 2024

RESPONSE FROM THE

KENT DOWNS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE UNIT

On 22nd November 2023, all AONBs in England and Wales were renamed National Landscapes. The Kent Downs National Landscape is the new name for the Kent Downs AONB.

Beautiful, thriving landscapes that everyone feels part of.

On 22 November 2023, all AONBs in England were renamed National Landscapes, although for legal purposes they remain Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In order to align with the rebranding, we would request that the recent name change of AONBs is reflected as appropriate within future iterations of the Plan. We note that in some circumstances it may be considered more appropriate by KCC to retain reference to AONB over National Landscape, given the current retention of this term in legislation and national policy, especially where this is a generic reference. We would request however that as a minimum, the new term is applied in any direct reference to either the High Weald National Landscape or Kent Downs National Landscape. References to AONBs are included at 2.2.1, Strategic Objectives 9 and 15 on page 56, 5.2.35 and 7.2.2.

Policy DM2 page 31.

This policy includes the requirement that '*Regard must be had to the purpose of the designation when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect land, in an AONB*'. This is taken directly from the statutory requirement applied to public bodies set out in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. However, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2023 (at S245) has replaced this former duty with a new one that now requires relevant authorities seek to further the purposes of the designation i.e. conserving and enhancing natural beauty, when exercising or performing any functions in relation to or so as to affect land in an AONB. It is therefore requested that the policy is amended to be brought into line with the new legislation.

Appendix A - Glossary

In order to reduce confusion as everyone becomes familiar with the name change, we would also request that both terms AONB and National Landscape are included in the Glossary at Appendix A to ensure the dual use of both terms is understood. It is suggested that the following wording could be used:

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - An area with statutory national landscape designation, the statutory purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Together with National Parks, AONB represent the nation's finest landscapes and are afforded the same protection in national policy. On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales were renamed 'National Landscapes' (NLs).

National Landscape – A designated landscape area formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales were renamed 'National Landscapes' (NLs). Their legal designation and policy status remain the same.

On 22nd November 2023, all AONBs in England and Wales were renamed National Landscapes. The Kent Downs National Landscape is the new name for the Kent Downs AONB.

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