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Our Ref: PDB/sjr

Your Ref:

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Dear Ms Spain

Cotswold National Park

At the meeting of Gloucestershire County Council held on 27 November 2019, the following resolution received unanimous support from elected members:

RESOLVED that

This Council notes that

- The Government recently commissioned a review of National Parks and AONB sites in England, led by Julian Glover. The findings of the review (Landscapes Review) were published in September.
- The Cotswolds, which already has Conservation Board Status as an AONB, receives approximately 23 million visitor days each year, with tourism worth around £900m to the local economy.
- The Landscapes Review identifies the Cotswolds as a 'strong candidate, to be considered for National Park status', suggesting Natural England and Ministers consider the case for this designation.
- While 44% of the AONB is in Cotswold District and 64% is in Gloucestershire, only a 10th of the current AONB board are elected members in Cotswold District and less than 40% of the councillors on the board come from Gloucestershire.

This Council further notes, however, that:

- The Cotswolds is not reliant upon just its landscapes and tourism for its economy, it is also a thriving area for a wide range of businesses and technologies with more than 40 established employment sites, many of which are located within the AONB.
- A National Park designation would greatly restrict the ability of Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council to pursue its economic and wider

social priorities, and the Council would lose a raft of planning powers to a largely appointed body.

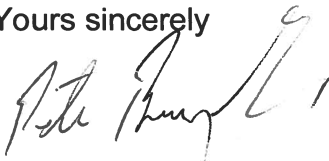
- There is already a housing affordability crisis in the Cotswolds and a National Park designation could further exacerbate this as there is often a 'price premium' applied to National Park areas designation. A National Park designation would reduce democratic accountability across significant parts of Cotswold and Stroud districts, as well as parts of Tewkesbury and Cheltenham.

This Council resolves to write to Natural England and relevant Ministers:

- To support aspects of the Landscape Review, including the underlying thrust of promoting and supporting national landscapes for our nation's wellbeing while protecting and enhancing our countryside.
- But to reject the notion of a National Park designation for the Cotswolds, noting that tourism is already thriving in the areas and that no evidence has been provided to show how the costs to the wider economic future outweigh the smaller benefits that would come from a change in designation.
- To work with other local authorities within the AONB and the Cotswolds Conservation Board to address the challenges and opportunities highlighted in the Landscapes Review.

The full text of the debate is available at <http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk> (please refer to the County Council minutes).

Yours sincerely



Pete Bungard
Chief Executive