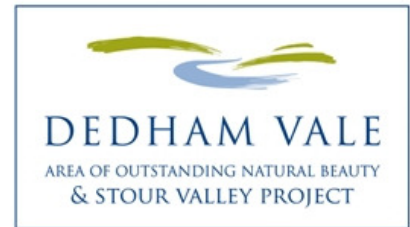


PRESS RELEASE
14 February 2014
For Immediate Release



Application sent for the first stage consideration of an extension of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

“This beautiful treasured landscape, which would be recognised by John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough who both painted here, is in urgent need of the long term protection which AONB status will bring”.

The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Partnership recently submitted its case for extending the boundary of the Dedham Vale AONB westwards towards Sudbury. The information has been sent to *Natural England*, the Government body responsible for designations, for a Stage 1 assessment of the case. The Partnership believes that this landscape meets the stringent criteria for natural beauty which are required for it to be given this highly desirable national designation.

Natural England will consider the information received, including a long list of supporting organisations and authorities, a summary of the landscape evidence and a map of the search area.

The Partnership represents the local authorities and other organisations that work together to conserve and enhance the Stour Valley. The submission will be considered by *Natural England*, and benchmarked alongside submissions from other locations around England and tested against its criteria for designating an AONB. We hope to hear further news about our submission and whether we will be asked to provide more evidence for a Stage 2 assessment in the spring.

Robert Erith, Chair of the Partnership, said:

“Extending the AONB has been a longstanding goal of the Partnership as well as many other bodies and individuals ever since the original designation of the Dedham Vale AONB in 1970. Constable and Gainsborough both painted here and their landscapes are recognisable today. It is encouraging that this application has the support of all the local authorities.”

---END---

NOTE FOR EDITORS

This is a separate boundary extension application from the proposal to extend the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB to cover the southern shore of the Stour Estuary (Manningtree to Harwich) where Natural England has agreed to start the formal process.

A map of the proposed area of search is available on our website

<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/planning-and-projects/aonb-boundary-review-2013/>

The following organisations have supported the submission:

Parish Councils (parishes in the search area)

Alphamstone and Lamarsh

The Henny's, Middleton and Twinstead

Mount Bures

Bures Hamlet/Bures St Mary

Little Cornard

County Councils

Essex County Council

Suffolk County Council

District and Borough Councils (these three cover the area of search)

Babergh District Council

Braintree District Council

Colchester Borough Council

MPs (the two search area constituencies)

Brookes Newmark MP

Tim Yeo MP

Other organisations

Colne Stour Association

CPRE Essex

Dedham Vale Society

Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society

University of Essex

For further information please contact Katherine Potts, Dedham Vale AONB manager
01473 264263 (Robert Erith, Chairman is currently away)