

Fyne Court
Broomfield
Bridgwater
TA5 2EQ

Quantock Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 31st July 2018

at

2.15pm

in the

Popham Hall, West Bagborough, TA4 3EQ

To: The Members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer, Katy Coate: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk.

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on the last page.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item No.	
1.	Annual election of JAC Chairman and Vice Chairman
2.	Apologies for absence
3.	Declarations of interest – an opportunity for members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting.
4.	Accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2018 (copy appended) and to consider any matters arising.
5.	Public question time – The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting, or present a petition on any matter within the Committee’s remit.
6.	Paper A - NPs and AONBs Review – Chris Edwards
7.	Paper B –Team and Partnership Report – Chris Edwards
8.	Paper C – Quantock Hills AONB Service 2018/19 Project Highlight Report – Iain Porter
9.	Presentation - European Projected Species (EPS) and what it means for woodland managers – Iain Porter
10.	Paper D – Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget Report 2018/19
11.	Paper E – Management Plan Review
12.	<p>Any other business of urgency – Proposed dates for next year’s meetings</p> <p>JAC’s all at 2.15pm locations TBC – Tuesday 27th November 2018, 5th February 2019, 7th May 2019 and 23rd July 2019</p> <p>(Officer Working Group Meeting dates – 6th November 2018, 22nd January 2019, 9th April 2019 and 9th July 2019)</p>
	<p>Note : Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service, The Quantock Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ. Tel No 01823 451884 or e-mail : quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</p>

THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer Katy Coate: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk.

2. Notes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer, Katy Coate: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk.

3. Public Question Time

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about **any matter on the Committee's agenda**. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. **The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.**

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Katy Coate, the committee administrator, **before the meeting**.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.

Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

4. Substitutions

Committee members are able to appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held at Spaxton Village Hall on Tuesday 24th April 2018.

Present

West Somerset Council	Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew (Chairman) Cllr Stuart Dowding
Somerset County Council	Cllr Hugh Davies Cllr Mandy Chilcott
Taunton Deane Borough Council	Cllr Nick Townsend
Sedgemoor District Council	Cllr Alan Bradford Cllr Mike Caswell
Forestry Commission	Mr Nick Salter
Friends of Quantock	Mrs Laetitia Kelly
CLA	Mr Hugh Warmington
Natural England	Jo Chesworth
National Trust	Stuart Riggs and Richard Snelling

Also Present Bill Jenman (Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Dev Officer), Sammy Fraser (AONB Volunteer Coordinator), Owen Jones (Partnership Ranger), Andy Stevenson (AONB Ranger), Chris Edwards (AONB Manager), Iain Porter (AONB Development Officer)

- 1. Apologies** Philip Comer (Quantock Eco and Friends of Quantock), Tim Burton (TDBC and WSC Officer), Julie Cooper (SDC Officer), Alan Hughes (Friends of Quantock), Sam Negus (Forestry Commission)
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
Anthony Trollope-Bellew declared being a member of Friends of Quantock, Quantock Eco, Crowcombe Parish Council and a Quantock Landowner.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting** – with the addition of Alan Bradford's apologies the minutes were signed off as a true representation of the meeting

Matters Arising – None

- 4. Public Question Time** – none

5. Quantock team and partnership update

5.1 There is potential for a follow on project for the Nature and Wellbeing Project which is coming into its final year. The plan may be to continue with this format but with a base in each AONB. Chris is keen to look into funding and draw up a project plan and would like the JAC's support on this.

5.2 The JAC noted the report and supported the recommendation to investigate a possible follow-on Nature and Wellbeing Project.

6. Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme Update

6.1 Iain gave a background to the development of the current scheme – The Quantocks are a very special landscape, with heath, woodland, coast, farmland fringe, historic heritage (52 scheduled monuments) both ancient cairns and more modern wells, cultural heritage (Coleridge inspiration) and extensive natural heritage.

The pace of change and scale of issues are building; the break-up of estates, leading to differences in land management and the look of the landscape. Also changes in building design and land use. Heritage degradation of those things that aren't designated, cooper mine house, cast iron signs etc. The impact of Hinkley Point C and the cumulative impact of other major developments (ie. Staplegrove, West Monkton), loss of tranquillity and dark skies also an issue.

It will be important to work with the influx of new people in these communities. There will be increased recreational use of the hills, each dwelling on fringe will increase pressure by an estimated 1.7 visits each year. Managing this impact by raising awareness of issues visitors are welcome but should not overwhelm and cause damage. It should be noted that the high value landscape goes beyond the AONB boundary.

6.2 Bill Jenman introduced himself, previously worked on the South Downs Way National Trail, Orkney Isles LPS and Touching the Tide LPS on the Suffolk coast. He advised that it is important to provide landscape stories that give meaning to locals and visitors. The visitor survey has gone out to tender. There will be existing partner discussions, he will be visiting all Parish Councils, commoners and landowners, would like any suggestions of other partners. Possible new partners from Taunton and Bridgwater from current socially underrepresented groups – there is often a need for an intermediate partner to link you in.

Bill warned that budgets for projects will be fluid at this point and some may be dropped the partnership board will be in charge of this. Local knowledge can be very valuable to make sure insensitive projects aren't pursued and new ideas can be catered for. The approved grant purpose is the common story or 'golden thread' as long as projects tie into this. There is some uncertainty over 2nd stage now, may be some more elements of competition. Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership Schemes will not exist as a separate entity after the current trench and has now been amalgamated with other funds.

6.3 Mike Caswell – Hinkley Point C light pollution very noticeable, must be affecting wildlife and residents. Iain added that EDF were supposed to ensure they would minimise light emissions. Bill added that dark skies in the LPS will need support from group to ensure other developments are guided by management plan policies.

ACTION JAC agreed for CE to contact HPC and check they are keeping to light levels applied to the developments.

7. Update on Volunteering

7.1 Dowsborough and Cothelstone Hill have seen recent works by volunteers and some new Heritage volunteers needing training in May. It's been very positive to be getting cross-over volunteering between AONB's. There was a total of 4169 hours last year provided by volunteers on the Quantock Hills.

7.2 Mike Caswell asked about adder population and the effect of swaling on numbers. Iain responded that 2010 to 2017 surveys by the Reptile and Amphibian Group for Somerset (RAGS) identified potential hibernaculum (winter hibernation) sites, in response the swaling and heather management will include specific areas of cut and collect rather than burning. RAGS will hopefully come back in a couple of years to see if there is a difference in populations. In 2010/11 they did a capture scheme and found Quantock adders were physically smaller than the average, it would be interesting to research this further.

7.3 JAC noted the report.

8. Rangers Report

8.1 Rangers reported the running of more hedgelaying courses enabled by Hinkley C funding – they are keen to find new locations for this.

8.2 Monthly volunteer group from MIND are having a great positive effect on the landscape (gorse bashing etc) and the groups wellbeing.

8.3 The Slow the Flow techniques (coir matting, birch woody dams) put in place last year are working and having an impact.

8.4 Volunteer Ranger led walks have been very successful for 2nd year running, also Chris Silverwood has run a successful whittling day at Cothelstone Hill. Engagement with the Duke of Edinburgh and school groups using the hills has been successful.

8.5 An invitation to the next Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group meeting will go out soon – Jochen Langbein has stepped down so Andy may be organising the deer count next year.

8.6 The JAC noted the report

9. Management Plan Review

9.1 A wider public survey of around 5-6 questions will be going out in May. The more detailed survey (which has already gone out) will be drawn together at the end of May.

9.2 There was discussion of the hierarchy of headings – Currently 20 AONBs have objectives, 22 have policies (11 have both) . Chris reported that with the thinking among other AONB managers is that a policy feels weightier and allows stronger arguments.

9.3 Mandy Chilcott felt you can have an objective without policies however the dark skies policy is a great example where policies could be useful. There was discussion of the possible confusion/conflict between AONB policy and district authority policy, it was suggested that they could be referred to as ‘Management Policies’ rather than just policies.

9.4 Hugh Davies said he felt you have to have a policy to deal with objective. Mike Caswell added there was a danger of conflicts between planning policy of district and AONB but policy on management of the hills be great. Decision was made to include them as Management Policies

9.5 The JAC advised on the sub-headings for the management plan themes as described above and supported the management plan review progress as described in the report.

10. Finance report tabled by Iain

10.1 There has been lots of miscoding for 2017/18. The pension deficit recharge has not appeared so Iain will be chasing for this. There is a meeting with SCC finance to sort out soon. Slightly lower surplus than expected, looking at ways forward and other forms of funding. Mandy Chilcott asked if there is an overspend is there a pot you dip into? Iain replied that yes there was a surplus that we knew we’d have to dip into, but this will not be the case in subsequent years.

11. AOB

None

Meeting closed at 4pm

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager

Date: 31/7/18

Subject: NPs and AONBs Review

National Parks and AONBs Review

Discussion document

1. As reported to the February JAC meeting the government has announced a review of National Parks and AONBs under their 25 Year Environment Plan (pp 65-66). *“This will consider coverage of designations, how designated areas deliver their responsibilities, how designated areas are financed, and whether there is scope for expansion. It will also consider opportunities to enhance the environment in existing designations, and expand on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks to connect more people with the natural environment.”*

This is in the context of the following text from the 25 Year Plan: *“Some of England’s most beautiful landscapes and geodiversity are protected via a range of designations including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)... they comprise some of our unique, most cherished and valuable natural assets. Over the next 25 years we want to make sure they are not only conserved but enhanced. Many of the policies set out in the rest of the Plan will contribute to making all areas more beautiful. In this section, we focus mainly on the designated areas.”*

On the following pages of this report you will find some key information about the review – the notification letter received from review board Chairman Julian Glover (2), a brief account from National Association for AONBs (NAAONBs) Chief Executive Howard Davies of his initial meeting with Julian Glover to discuss the review (3), a brief bio of all 6 panel members (4), and Terms of Reference for the review (5). These documents are all helpful in getting a feel for the review approach and are open to discussion in this meeting.

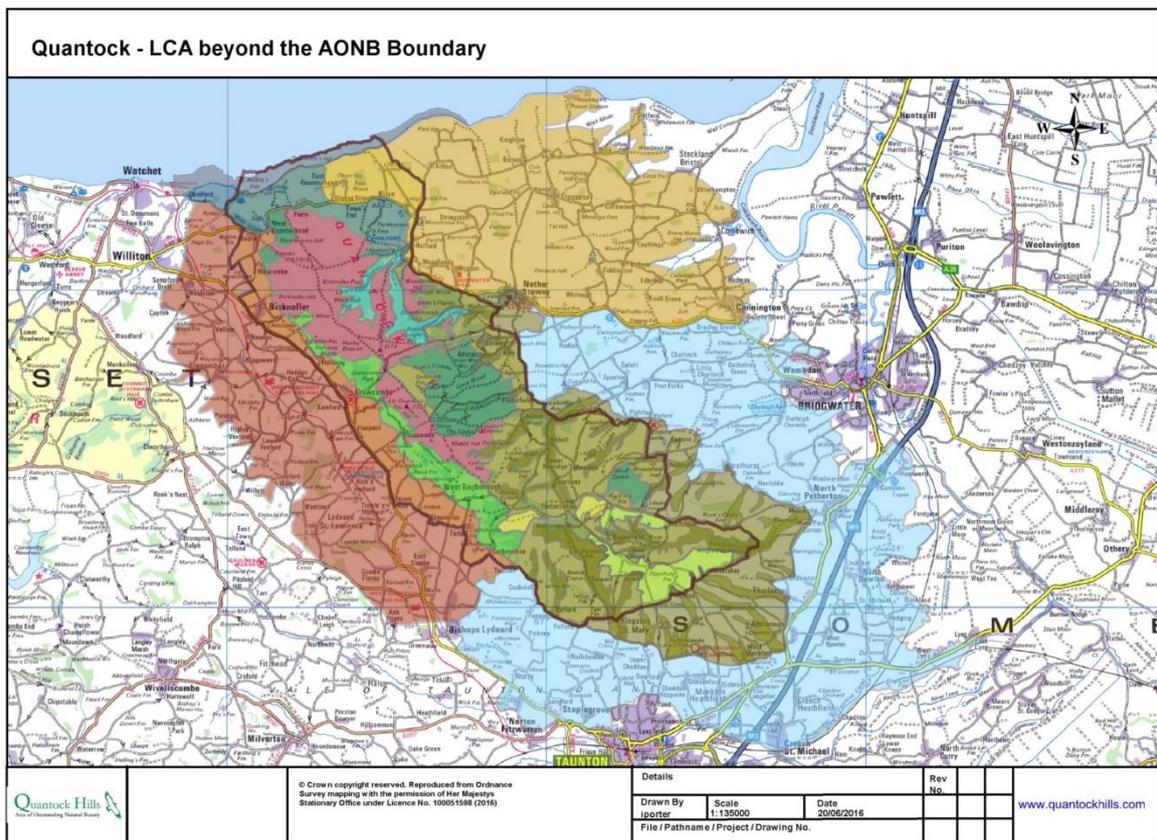
On the explicit objective of the review to consider the boundaries and governance of our protected landscapes the JAC Chairman is keen that the JAC considers the main options in advance of contact from the review panel. The most relevant objectives of the review to this are:

- *The case for extension or creation of new designated areas*
- *How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets*

Three obvious potential outcomes for the Quantock Hills AONB offer themselves:

No change: this would see the AONB continue as it is subject to anticipated proposals from the review in respect of AONB funding, governance and purposes.

Boundary Extension: While any extension to the AONB boundary would take a number of factors into account it would, as a landscape designation, be expected to follow the landscape character of the area. Emma-Jane Preece has produced a preliminary extended Landscape Character Map for the AONB which indicates the extent of landscape character areas extending beyond the AONB boundary:



The landscape types reaching beyond the boundary include Jurassic Coast at the north and moving clockwise Agricultural Fringe and Coast, then (pale blue) High Vale to Levels. Within this the Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes type reaches beyond the boundary as does the Fringing Foothills landscape type along the AONB's western boundary.

Inclusion in Exmoor National Park: This potential option would lead to extensive change in strategic management, governance, funding and representation. The JAC Chairman has suggested there are at least four areas he feels strongly about in respect of this option:

- Inclusion of the word Quantock in the name of the revised National Park *ie Exmoor and the Quantocks National Park* to reflect the identity of the new geography and communities.
- The creation of a Quantock sub-committee within the Exmoor National Park Authority structure.
- The continuation of Ranger activities on the hills with dedicated Quantock Ranger/s.
- District Council representation on the Authority would include both the new Somerset West and Taunton Council and Sedgemoor District Council.

2. In early June the JAC Chairman received the following letter from Julian Glover:

Mr Anthony Trollope-Bellew
Quantock Hills AONB Partnership
Fyne Court
Broomfield
Bridgwater
SOMERSET
TA5 2EQ

31 May 2018

Dear Anthony,

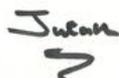
As I expect you already know, Michael Gove announced on Sunday that he has asked me to lead the Review of Designated Landscapes - a commitment of the Government's 25-Year Plan for the Environment.

I'm honoured to accept. The review is a chance to renew the mission of our National Parks and AONBs almost 70 years after the first - the Peak Park where I live - was set up. I care about the beauty of our landscapes, their history and their biodiversity. I admire the work done by early campaigners such as John Dower and Sir Arthur Hobhouse. If we can capture even a fraction of their energy and idealism in this new review, I'll be proud.

Our Terms of Reference stress that there is no intention to diminish protections: but I think there are things that we can do to make a successful system even better. I'll be supported by an advisory panel with strong experience in landscape, biodiversity, heritage, farming and rural issues who will provide advice, challenge and energy and we will set out more about that very soon. I am looking forward to getting out and meeting people - and learning from them. I want this Review to be a collaborative process, drawing on the expertise that exists in those with a passion for these special places.

I'm currently finalising arrangements and will be able to share more details of how I hope the review will work soon. My colleagues will be in touch to lay out further arrangements for visits and engagements. I can't wait to get started and with your help I know we can make the Review a success. I enclose with this letter a copy of the Terms of Reference.

Yours sincerely,



Julian Glover

2. In early July the National Association of AONBs (NAAONBs) Chief Executive Howard Davies had an initial meeting with Julian to discuss the review. Here are Howard's comments:

I will be requesting a more formal of the meeting note from Defra, but thought a quick personal take on the meeting with Julian from my perspective might be useful.

Firstly, there appears a real appetite to positively stretch the potential and impact of designated landscapes. Julian has a genuine curiosity about the world of designated landscapes and to help him get there we need to give him, in the words of Sue, some 'stunning stats and killer facts' so he really understands the range, diversity, impact and business model of AONBs. I totally agree and will be speaking with Defra on this later today.

The higher level discussion included an exploration around what 'national' really means in our context, and how AONBs might better deliver for the nation. This clearly reflects the political ambition set out in the 25 year plan and is something upon which we will need to come to a view. We also discussed why AONBs are not always understood as 'special'; something with which the

National Parks don't have an issue, despite equivalence in landscape 'status'. The conversation built on the value that established, trusted, partnerships have in local delivery. We also touched on the value of a central organising principle around which multiple delivery bodies might rally, and the notion of a well-being purpose piqued interest. We briefly explored the relative merits of behavioural verses organisational change, and the false dichotomy of National Park or AONB.

More specifically, we discussed the role of AONBs in setting a framework for any future land management scheme, uplands, and our working relationship with farmers and land owners. We also touched on how we might usefully develop the work some of us are doing around natural capital and ecosystem services. We talked about the impact of development pressure, particularly in the South East, and our 'fitness for purpose' (or lack of) in managing this. In this context we touched on local plans and the value of strategic planning. We also explored the 'AONB brand' and moniker; a discussion that seemed to lend weight to at least a consideration of a re-brand.

Throughout the discussion the vulnerability of our funding model was not lost on Julian. To enter into this discussion with the central message of needing more money would have been a mistake so we didn't take this route. There is ample time to build a baseline of facts, upon which decisions will be made. Rest assured that facts on funding will be part of that mix.

The ambition of the NAAONB and AONB lead officers to really make something of the review, and support the review team in reaching a valuable conclusion was clear, and I felt Julian appreciated our energy and support.

Defra officials present were Marie Southgate, Deputy Director for Land Use, Lou Leighton-McTague, the recently appointed Head of the Review Secretariat, and Dan Jones, Head of Protected Landscape Policy.

This was the first meeting that Julian had instigated, and Defra was very pleased with the way it went. Others that were there there may well have had additional thoughts on the meeting and I may well have missed bits, so please feel free to add to this. I hope this is useful. I will keep you posted on developments.

*Howard
NAAONB*

- 3.** The review will be led by Julian Glover and supported by an advisory group. The members of the group were originally announced as Nicola Blackwood, Lord Cameron of Dillington, Jim Dixon, Sarah Mukherjee, James Rebanks and Dame Fiona Reynolds. James Rebanks has subsequently withdrawn from the panel. The review is expected to begin in June 2018 and will report in 2019. Brief biogs for the group follow:

Julian Glover

Associate editor at the London Evening Standard and author of the biography Man of Iron: Thomas Telford and the Building of Britain. He has worked as leader writer and columnist at the Guardian and as a Special Adviser in Number 10 and the Department for Transport.

He will be supported by an advisory panel bringing a vast breadth of experience in landscape, biodiversity, heritage, farming and rural issues.

The panel will be comprised of:

Nicola Blackwood

Former Conservative MP for Oxford West and Abingdon. She was Chair of the Science and Technology Committee from July 2015 to May 2016 and Minister for Public Health and Innovation from 2016 to 2017.

Lord Cameron of Dillington

Cross-bench peer, farmer and landowner. As the former Chair of the Countryside Agency, he is a strong advocate for rural affairs. He is currently the chair of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Committee and the Advisory Council for the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. He is also on the Steering Board of the Government's Global Food Security Programme.

Jim Dixon

Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park Authority for 12 years, before stepping down in 2014. He is currently a writer on countryside issues, including for the Times, and a trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Sarah Mukherjee

Former BBC environment and rural affairs correspondent and previous Director of Environment at Water UK. She is currently Chief Executive of the Crop Protection Association. She is a trustee and advisory group member for several charities, supporting both environmental stewardship and education in farming.

Dame Fiona Reynolds

Formerly the Director-General of the National Trust and current Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge and Chair of the Green Alliance. She is the author of *The Fight for Beauty* (2016), a history of thought and public policy on landscapes and environment in Britain.

4. The Review Terms of Reference:

**Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs):
Terms of Reference**

Introduction:

Our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are a great success. England is a more beautiful and more diverse place because previous generations took the care to campaign for their creation.

In 1945, the government set up a committee under Sir Arthur Hobhouse, who

recommended that Britain establish national parks to preserve and enhance their natural beauty and provide recreational opportunities for all members of the public. In 1949, the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act established these national parks, which the minister of the day described as “the most exciting Act of the post-war Parliament.” That legislation created a statutory framework for National Parks and AONBs. In brief, National Parks’ purposes are to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks. For AONBs, the primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Now, as the oldest National Park approaches its 70th anniversary, comes a chance to renew this mission.

That is the context in which this Review takes place. It aims not to diminish the character or independence of our designated landscapes, or to impose new burdens on them and the people who live and work in the areas they cover. Instead, its purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist them, and whether definitions and systems - which in many cases date back to their original creation - are still sufficient.

At the outset, it is also important to state one thing the review will not do: propose reductions in either the geographic extent or the protections given to England’s designated landscapes.

Some context:

In January 2018 the Government published a 25-Year Plan for the Environment. It set out an approach to protect landscapes and habitats in England and committed to undertaking a Review National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The publication of these terms of reference to guide that Review is the next step.

Scope:

The Review will consider National Parks and AONBs in England, including the role of these areas in relation to other places designated for environmental purposes. Landscapes in Wales and Scotland are under devolved administrations and therefore do not fall under the scope of this Review.

The Review will respect the cultural and visual heritage of people, farms and businesses in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Objectives:

In the context of meeting both local and national priorities and wider environmental governance, the Review will examine and make recommendations on:

- *The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met*
- *The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment*

- *The case for extension or creation of new designated areas*
- *How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets*
- *The financing of National Parks and AONBs*
- *How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations*
- *How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing*
- *How well National Parks and AONBs support communities*

Expanding on work already underway, the review will also take advice from Natural England on the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

Activity:

The Review will be led by Julian Glover and supported by an experienced advisory group.

The Review will draw on existing evidence and that submitted by interested groups and individuals during the course of the Review. The review team will also visit people and places in a range of designated landscapes.

Cross-Government involvement:

This is a cross-Government Review, with Defra providing the secretariat and appointing a lead to undertake the Review.

Recommendations will be made to the Government. Implementation will be led by the Defra Secretary of State.

Expected Timetable:

The Review will report in 2019 (the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act).

A more detailed timetable will be developed following commencement of the Review.

Chris Edwards
July 2018

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager

Date: 31/7/17

Subject: Team and Partnership Report

AONB Team and Partnership Report

1. Team

1.1 We are currently recruiting a part-time Landscape Planning Officer in response to the sad news that Emma-Jane is leaving the AONB Service after over 10 years of sterling work protecting and enhancing the landscape of the Quantock Hills. It is a 2 day week post and application details for interested friends or colleagues are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybc5wlcw> the closing date was July 19th. The recruitment process which included Local Authority internal advertising, the Landscape Institute specialist jobs service and extensive social media promotion has had a low success rate for this rather specialised part-time post and I am currently assessing whether we have an applicant with the core skills required.

1.2 Nature and Wellbeing Officer Kristen Lambert will be returning from maternity leave in early November. Kristen's and Danielle's contracts are currently being amended in response to this information as the project budget is fixed and cost differentials set the length of time the project has to run.

1.3 The team, particularly rangers, volunteers and communications are currently on alert promoting fire safety on the hills.

2. Partnership

2.1 The National Association of AONBs has submitted a joint bid to Defra on behalf of 17 AONBs with each of these proposals laid out separately in the document. There is also a synopsis of the Quantock element:

"Quantock Hills AONB Partnership has similarly proposed a comprehensive scheme that would also deliver across all the six policies. They will cover a geographical area larger than the AONB, taking in the setting of the designated landscape so that the benefits of the designation spill over into the surrounding communities. This scheme would aspire to bring together landscape, biodiversity, ecosystem and cultural benefits with economic business sustainability. The land management agreements will be genuinely "whole unit" not simply geographically but in respect of land management activity, achievable through liaison and coordination at a local level the agreements will be bespoke and flexible, empowering the land management community rather than imposing top-down prescriptions."

2.2 The three AONBs involved in the Nature and Wellbeing project are in discussions with the Somerset Wildlife Trust to submit a joint funding bid for a new N&W project to follow the end of the current one.

2.3 The JAC asked me to follow up on concerns about the night-time light levels generated by Hinkley C construction. I am in touch with West Somerset Council to see the best way of taking this forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC supports the development of a follow-on Nature and Wellbeing Project in a partnership between the main Somerset AONBs and the Somerset Wildlife Trust**
- 2. The JAC notes the report**

Chris Edwards

July 2018

Paper C

Status. Quantock Hills AONB Service 2018/19 Project Highlight Report		
Author: Iain Porter, Development Officer	Date: 31/07/2018	
Work done to date	Future work	£
<p>Land Management & Skills Scheme [Sc106 / DCO funded associated with HPC]</p> <p>The project has 3 elements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Building Resilience in farming and forestry. The purpose of this project was to raise awareness among farmers, foresters and landowners of the need to build resilience into land management, starting at national level (Food & Research Agency, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Forestry Commission and Natural England) before looking at local habitats and landscapes. There was also a need to identify priority farmland species and expand knowledge of ‘at risk’ species (eg bats, farmland birds, wildflowers) and to identify threatening invasive species and appropriate control of these. 2) Orchards management. The aim of this project was to increase awareness of the environmental and commercial benefits of orchards as well as providing training to allow positive management and planting of orchards. The main target audience was farmers and landowners with secondary audience of community groups and young people. 3) Species monitoring for communities. The aim of this project was to increase community engagement / volunteering in species monitoring. It provided activities to engage a range of community groups to increase awareness of the species which inhabit the local landscape. There was an aim to target young people as well as the more traditional volunteers. Initial thoughts were to work through schools to achieve this. The project aimed to establish community monitoring, to leave a legacy of community monitoring groups with their own voluntary monitoring schemes eg in Bridgwater bay and local villages. <p><u>Project outputs:</u> Total number of people attending workshops / training = 180 Total number of young people (5-16) attending training = 26 Total number of businesses attending workshop / training = 102 Total number of events / training sessions = 12</p>	<p>The Building Resilience and Orchard Management elements of this project are complete. There is further engagement / training work to be undertaken, especially with young people which will occur during 2018.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div>	<p>Budget: £27,500</p> <p>ETD*: £23,500</p> <p><i>Project includes recharge</i></p>
<p>Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (GQLDF) [Sc106 / DCO funded associated with HPC]</p> <p>The fund provides grants to farmers, land owners, community groups and individuals within the ‘affected’ area of Hinkley Point C for landscape enhancement projects including orchard planting, woodland planting and standard tree planting, hedgerow management and creation, pond creation, wildflower meadow, willow pollarding and circular economic schemes.</p>	<p>Continue to provide grants for landscape schemes, with priority being given to community groups or where projects can demonstrate significant public benefit.</p>	<p>Budget: £250,000</p> <p>ETD: £80,000#</p> <p><i>Project includes</i></p>

<p>To date the fund has received 142 expressions of interest, of which 47 have come forward to application stage, of which 35 have been approved. Project outputs: Total length of new hedge planted: 9 projects totalling 2.2km Total length of existing hedge managed: 7 projects totalling 2.2km Number of orchard trees planted: 7 projects totalling 171 trees Number of ponds restored: 3 Area of pond restored: 2,260m² Number of native standard trees planted: 8 projects totalling 446 trees Wildlife Meadows: 4 projects totalling 2.0Ha Heritage features restored: 3</p>	<p><i>#does not include grants awarded but not yet claimed.</i></p>	<p><i>recharge</i></p>
<p>Landscape Improvement Scheme [Sc106 / DCO funded associated with HPC]</p> <p>The project aims to create linkages between high value habitats associated with the core area of the Quantock Hills. The works will include creation of unimproved extensive grasslands, heathland, wood pasture and sessile oak woods linking the existing habitats. Due to permissions and project designs much of the expenditure is back loaded with this project.</p> <p>Complete – St Audries, West Quantoxhead. FC cleared 12Ha of Corsican Pine, which had Red Band Needle Blight. Under the approved Forest Plan 9Ha of the site was to remain as open land. The LIS undertook stump grinding and windrowing of brash to create a site which can be more easily managed and kept open. Early indications are good with many coloniser species such as Birdsfoot trefoil, red sand spurrey, wood sorrel and climbing corydalis apparent after 4 months and bell heather, cross-leaved heath, western gorse and Wavy hair grass common across the site after 16 months.</p>	<p>Ramscombe, Great Wood. FC have undertaken significant thinning and clearance works as part of the agreed Forest Plan. As part of this FC and AONB are currently in discussions about how to keep some corridors as open habitat. During autumn / winter AONB will be looking to remove rhododendron along stream corridor prior to further works in future years.</p>	<p>Budget: £500,000</p> <p>ETD: £26,000</p> <p><i>Project includes recharge</i></p>
<p>Hills to Levels Natural Flood Management [Somerset Rivers Authority Grant, via FWAG-SW Project]</p> <p>During the winter and spring of 2017 and 2018 the Quantock Hills AONB Service undertook works on land at Lydeard Hill and Aisholt Common with the aim of reducing sediment loss, reducing water flow speeds and volumes and reducing erosion. Lydeard Hill and Aisholt Common are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for the upland / lowland heath matrix. As such they are sensitive habitats and currently managed by landowners and commoners under a number of Agri-environment schemes. All works are classed as Natural Flood Management (NFM) not traditional 'hard' engineering.</p>	<p>The AONB Service is currently in discussion with FWAG-SW about a phase 3 project.</p> <p>There is also a separate EA project happened at the north west quarter of the Quantock Hills looking at the</p>	<p>Budget £11,445</p> <p>ETD: £11,445</p> <p><i>Project includes recharge</i></p>

<p>Though at the top of water catchments it has been apparent that during high intensity rain events water is able flow off the land quickly and form gullies or use existing tracks. This has led to erosion of the tracks, sediment / soil loss and flooding further downstream in Durborough and West Bagborough.</p> <p>With guidance from FWAG-SW the AONB Service developed a series of works aimed at slowing flow, trapping sediment, shedding water from the tracks and gullies onto adjacent pasture land and creating a pond area to store excess water. Early indications are that the works are successful and lessons learnt have been fed back to FWAG-SW and the SRA who are keen to undertake further works at the headwaters of the stream systems of the Quantock Hills</p>	<p>West Somerset Stream Systems and how NFM can reduce impacts of high intensity rain incidents. The AONB Service has fed into initial plans and is looking to become further involved as appropriate.</p> 	
<p>Quantock Views</p> <p>A volunteer led project to create a digital archive of Quantock images based on landscape and village scape. The project aims to collect and digitise photographs, paintings or any graphic image of the Quantock Hills and to make the images accessible through the provision of a website (www.quantockviews.uk).</p> <p>The project is run by volunteers who will source, scan, and catalogue images from local communities.</p> <p>New website built and launched 356 images, collected, scanned & catalogued 6 volunteers trained / recruited</p>	<p>Continue to collect, scan and upload images provided by local communities. The project may look to recruit more volunteers depending upon the demand.</p>	<p>Budget: £5,000</p> <p>ETD: £3,783</p>
<p>Community Heritage Grant [Historic England Community Building Grant]</p> <p>The Capacity Building Grant from Historic England is key to developing skills with volunteers allowing more work to be done on the ground. The project aims to upskill a small number of volunteers allowing them to work with core staff and as an independent unit to undertake tasks on Scheduled Monuments (SM's) and other heritage assets.</p> <p>The Project will also undertake training in erosion restoration techniques for volunteers and undertake restoration / protection of a Scheduled Monument at a key visitor site with appropriate interpretation / information with the aim of raising the profile of these heritage assets. Years 1 & 2 have undertaken specialist training with volunteers including purchase of equipment and PPE.</p>	<p>Undertake heritage asset restoration technique training for 8 volunteers</p> <p>Clear scrub from 5 SMs</p> <p>Undertake erosion restoration works on priority SM</p>	<p>Budget: £5,286</p> <p>ETD: £1,879</p>

<p>The final year will undertake further training on heritage asset restoration as well as undertake a pilot project. Outputs to date:</p> <p>4 volunteers trained (2 x brushcutter / 1 x ATV / 1 x chainsaw)</p> <p>6 SM's cleared of scrub.</p>	 <p>Historic England</p>	
<p>Nature & Wellbeing [Funded by Public Health, SCC]</p> <p>The pilot project aimed to increase accessibility of Somerset's AONB to aid in the health and wellbeing of catchment communities. For the Quantock Hills this includes the parishes within and adjacent to the AONB and the towns of Williton, Bridgwater and Taunton. Work streams include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a database of contacts / organisations and regularly promote activities in AONBs. • Embed digital activity guides in AONBs communications / promotions. • Link to the Zing Somerset and Somerset Choices websites where appropriate. • Attend relevant events and meetings to promote project. • Create links with local community groups • Contribute to the MOVE group • Devise and run two events aimed at engaging partners so they promote activities to their clients / patients. • Deliver awareness raising session for AONB staff and others as appropriate about AONBs nature and health & wellbeing. • Offer Mental Health First Aid training to relevant AONB staff. • Undertake supported group visits / activities to promote AONBs to groups working with vulnerable, isolated / lonely people with health & wellbeing needs. • Contact and build relationships with children centre in target areas. Good initial success in Quantock target areas • Organise visits from schools to promote healthy activity (primary schools) • Promote AONB volunteering opportunities to participants from outreach work <p>Significant progress was made in the first year of the project with the project officer exceeding targets for groups engaged and events promoted / delivered. In December 2017 the Project Officer went on maternity leave. It was appreciated that due to the key aspect of stakeholder contacts and relationships with partners it would be very hard for a person to cover the maternity in the same way. In January 2018 Danielle Wrench started as a project assistant to support existing groups and ensure a constant, albeit lower level, of promotion.</p>	<p>Continue to support existing groups access the Quantock Hills. With return of Project Officer in autumn 2018 look to build sustainability of current work beyond funded project timescales.</p> <p>Develop a follow-on Nature and Wellbeing project working with other partners such as Public Health, AONBs and SWT.</p> 	<p>Budget £72,077</p> <p>ETD: £64,730</p>

<p>Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme [Heritage Lottery Fund]</p> <p>The Landscape Partnership Scheme is in its development phase (budget / expenditure reflects this) to fully develop and submit a stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a 5-year scheme worth £2.6m. During the development stage the Landscape Partner Development Officer (LPDO) will undertake further research and evidence gathering, work with partners to develop fully proposals from stage 1 and develop match funding opportunities. To date much of the work has involved wide ranging discussion with existing and new partners but also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of scheme board. The scheme has a separate Partnership Board which has now been convened. • Visitor Survey – contract released and face to face interviews being undertaken during Jul – Sept. • Non-user survey – The LPDO has undertaken engagement work in Bridgwater with non-users and is looking to commission further work to be undertaken to ensure robust evidence in support of the stage 2 application. • Project development. A normal activity during the development phase is to revisit the proposed projects and assess viability and suitability. The LPDO has started to do this looking to ensure projects are at the appropriate stage of development for submission e.g. relevant consents or permissions in place. • HLF liaison. Due to changes in HLF grant programmes this element is more important than previously thought. Changes in Stage 2 requirements, deadlines for submission etc all mean <p><i>Further detail can be found in Landscape Partnership Development Officer Report Apr – Jun2018 (Appendix A).</i></p>	<p>Development of the stage 2 application to HLF including project plans, partner engagement evidence gathering and scheme ‘testing’ through pilot work.</p> 	<p>Budget: £101.300</p> <p>ETD: £9,382</p>
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QHJAC Project Highlight Report - Appendix A

Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme LP-16-07486

Report April to June 2018

Note; updated to 11th July

1 Board Meeting

The Board met on 26th June 2018 and was updated on progress and with the finance update (attached). Bob Croft of the South West Heritage Trust was elected Chair and Crispian Cook of Halsway Manor National Centre for Folk Arts was elected Vice Chair.

2 Scheme Name and logo

The Scheme name was discussed by the Board, who agreed to change the name to the “Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme”. This is in response to feedback that the inclusion of the word “Hills” created the impression that the project was only about the open Common land moorland not the much wider area really involved.

A designer has been approached to a small selection of logo designs from which the Board can select a final choice. The Board also agreed that the strapline “Reimagining the Manor” was very helpful in some contexts (eg historic heritage) but not others (eg youth work), so the logo should come in two versions one with and one without this line for use as appropriate.

3 Approach to LPS Development

The PO has been getting an overview of the area and meeting stakeholders including landowners, Commoners, key staff in other organisations and other potential project partners. He has also met with Public Health and Children’s and Young People’s Services within SCC and been passed a good range of local contacts. He has visited some of the other LPS in delivery and development, and a couple of other Lottery funded projects working in similar fields, in the South West region.

He has also written to all the Parish Councils in the project area asking if he can come to speak to them about the project. 13 of 27 have so far responded, all positively.

A few minor concerns have been expressed about individual project proposals but so far everyone, elected members, professionals, and community members, has been very supportive.

4 Audience Development

The visitor survey has been commissioned and face to face survey work has started at various key points around the Quantocks. An additional on line survey will go live shortly. This will give us a good view of the existing user profile and how it has changed since 2003.

The survey will not, however, address the issue of non-users and particularly not of disadvantaged or vulnerable people who are a key audience for the LPS. On 30th April Alison Millwood, our HLF Mentor, led a workshop on Audience development and Social Inclusion for a number of key stakeholders (including members of the Board) to scope out the potential audiences, barriers to their participation, and ways we could engage with them.

Since then the PO has been following up the contacts and suggestions and met several of the important players as well as meeting ordinary people from the community in target wards.

First outreach event

One way of meeting members of the community is to “piggy back” existing events. The PO has been to 2 so far and asked a few simple questions of families. The small number of responses so far are encouraging; of 31 families, most do visit the countryside sometimes (23/31) but only about half (16/31) have been to the Quantocks even though they all knew what and where they are. Lack of transport was the commonest reason. All but 2 said they would like to go to organised events in the Quantocks (where relevant, if we made transport available). Incidentally the limited sample so far includes one Hungarian and two families of South Asian heritage.

Additional consultant support

The PO was concerned from the beginning that the externally commissioned visitor survey did not cover non users. Some third party input would be helpful, both in terms of collecting a larger and more robust data set and in terms of specialist independent expertise.

We have been able to find some room for manoeuvre in the budget and we will shortly be commissioning an additional piece of consultancy work from Heritage Insider to complement our own direct conversations.

The contract with the South West Research Company (who are doing the user survey) allows for us to contribute sections to their report on non-users and to integrate those findings into the overall report recommendations and conclusions.

Pilot event

We've also decided to run a pilot event with a youth club from Bridgwater. A minibus load of teenagers will have an afternoon walk, overnight camp, and some beach activities over 1 – 3rd August. The PO has met the young people involved and is sure they will get a lot out of it, but he will be explicitly taking the opportunity to talk to them in more depth about what works for them, issues and opportunities, get an overview of the logistics and any safeguarding issues, etc.

5 Habitat Suitability (Connectivity) Study

This development stage project was intended to use habitat modelling to map areas of greatest opportunity for habitat creation and restoration work during delivery. However we visited Somerset Environmental Records Centre and it is clear that their dataset is not yet adequate for our needs. In particular we needed a model that captures the connectivity

provided by hedgerows, and hence shows the highest priority gaps in hedgerows that the LPS could seek to join up and they do not have this for the Quantock area.

The conversation was still fruitful because the model's shortcomings add even more weight to the identified need for our proposed hedgerow survey project, and the LPS could provide a pilot area to study the impact of better hedgerow data on the overall connectivity model and so have a wider value beyond the project. While the existing data set cannot, after all, help us to spatially plan projects, it does therefore add weight to our case for a Stage 2 grant to do this work.

A helpful side effect is that the £5k budget earmarked for this work can be redeployed to meet an identified need for more external support for work identifying potential audiences amongst people who do not currently access the area - see above.

We also met with SERC to discuss the proposed monitoring programmes and data processing needs during delivery – we agreed with them that an SLA will be needed and they will be outlining and costing a possible arrangement.

6 Digital interpretation

There's a lot of digital and other media based interpretation scattered through the various proposed projects that might be better brought together as a more integrated package. This will also make it easier to build-in accessibility and audience participation rather than having these only as "add-ons" to some of the individual projects.

We held a workshop on the 2nd July with a number of parties from within and outside the LPS to explore possibilities. A good range of ideas were tabled but the group will need to meet again to develop these into deliverable projects.

7 Views and the Landscape

Similarly, there are is a proposed project about views and how they can be recognised in Planning Decisions and a wider project about how people experience and value their own favourite viewpoints. We are looking to see if these, too, might work better as an integrated whole, to which we could add writing, photographic, or other art competitions – which might also start to integrate with the Romantic Poets thread. Once we have a firmer plan for this aspect of LCAP delivery we will commission the development phase LCA work to ensure it properly supports it.

8 Capital works – the Crowcombe Gate Car Park site restoration.

The project to restore the existing site, and relocate the car park, will require several legal consents as well as the agreement of a number of interested parties, so it has a longer lead-in time than most other capital works. Together with the Friends of the Quantocks the PO has worked up the project and agreed several modifications to take account of feedback received.

We now have a plan that has the support of all the key stakeholders involved. However the project will stand or fall by our ability to have a robust restoration plan for the existing area, which is fundamentally where the interests of HLF, Natural England, and the Commoners lie.

We are sure there is a good solution, but more research is needed before we can put forward a firm proposal for consultation.

9 Somerset Wildlife Trust

SWT is not active in the project area and is not developing new projects there, so SWT is unlikely to be a significant project partner but also unlikely to have any conflicts of interest. SWT has just completed the Routes to the River Tone project in Taunton so has a pool of interested potential volunteers (esp. for bat survey) that we could tap into. SWT would like to see the results of our audience research when available

10 Batty Quantocks

The PO met with two SCC Ecologists who are very supportive of the LPS and happy to assist with the monitoring and events programmes. There is a particular interest in expanding the Batty Quantocks project to fill the data gap about Barbastelle flightlines in the S and W of the area (the NW has been done because of Hinkley). This would be ideal for volunteer engagement, to target habitat restoration work, and for easily accessible visual interpretation of the importance of habitat connectivity. This would cost an additional <£10k for equipment but they would be willing to volunteer their time outside working hours.

We also met with Sarah Williams of Wessex Water. WW are undertaking monitoring of Brown Long-Eared bats in the NW part of the project area, and would be interested in joining forces for an overview bat project with volunteer input. WW also involved in catchment management work in the same area which the LPS should co-ordinate with.

11 Young Rangers and Apprenticeships

The PO met with Somerset Rural Youth Project (will be renamed Young Somerset from September) – they can solve most of the issues with the Young Rangers and apprenticeship projects that had been of concern, incl pastoral care needs for the challenging target audience, transport issues, a training infrastructure, and progression/legacy. Emerging proposal is that SRYP is delivery partner for Young Rangers, with AONB and others providing work opportunities and support. The keenest 3 young people from the first intake would go on to be offered apprenticeships. Results in 3 apprenticeships not 2 x 2 = 4 but 3 at once is a more robust model (allows for drop outs, illness, holidays, etc.) and the opportunity for progression is a major incentive for Young Rangers participation. SRYP may even be able to offer some paid jobs at the end.

Subject to HLF agreement the Board agreed to invite SRYP to join them, as an organisation with youth and social engagement expertise. SRYP are the sole plausible provider for this work in this area and we will be asking HLF's agreement to proceed on this basis.

12 Other engagement work with young people

The PO has been meeting several smaller youth activity providers – there are a number of diverse smaller NGOs operating in this area, in contrast to the situation with formal training providers. We will be seeking HLF and other advice on how best to structure an open application process to seek the best 2-4 of them to work with, probably with a review point halfway through the LPS delivery.

13 Quantock Futures

There is concern from the PO and Board that that the current scope of the project was small enough to start a significant argument and not big enough to allow for a proper, credible, stakeholder engagement process. Subject to HLF agreement, we have agreed to employ a specialist third party facilitation contractor to have a proper process encompassing social, economic, ecological, and climate change issues to produce a 50 or 100 year vision that can ripple through both AONB and other Management Plan decisions but also short term matters such as tree planting choices, and farm investment decisions. This will require a significant increase in budget.

14 Overall Budget

Several emerging project ideas above will require an increase or restructure of project budgets, although some would also potentially bring new partnership funding to offset this. A few other project budgets can be reduced and/or one or two might be dropped from the final LCAP list as lower priorities when the Board makes a final selection.

We are confident that the LPS objectives can be met within the existing budget envelope and particularly within the HLF grant request amount submitted at Stage 1.

Paper D

To. Quantock Hills JAC			Date: 31/07/2018.		
Status: Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget Report (25%)			Author: Iain Porter		
	Measure	Budget	Performance	Comments	RAG
CORE	£ / % spent	£271,995	£68,762 / 25%		😊
	£ / % spent [salaries, NI, SA]	£216,133	£51,920 / 24%		😊
	£ / % spent [training]	£1,550	£470 / 30%		😊
	£ / % spent [rent, rates, electricity, water, premise insurance]	£13,428	£1,280 / 9%	Office rent due for payment Sept & Feb	😊
	£ / % spent [stationary, post, phones, printing]	£3,000	£694 / 23%		😊
	£ / % spent [travel, vehicle costs]	£17,484	£8,884 / 51%	Vehicle lease cost and insurance front loaded.	😊
	£ / % spent [Equipment, maintenance, clothing, uniform]	£4,100	£1,457 / 36%		😐
	£ / % spent [Literature, publications, publicity]	£0	£0 / 0%		😊
	£ / % spent [Meeting costs, hospitality]	£800	£216 / 27%		😐
	£ / % spent [Management fee, insurance]	£8,700	£0 / 0%	To be paid March 2019.	😊
	£ / % spent [Memberships]	£2,500	£2,658 / 106%	NAAONB late notice of increased subscription cost	😐
	£ / % spent [Research & Development]	£4,300	£1,183 / 28%		😊
	£ / % income [core]	-£263,922	-£0 / 0%	Invoices to core funders out June 2018	😊
Core Summary – Minor budget amendments required due to late notice of increases in services such as vehicle maintenance (15%), insurance (12%) and NAAONB subscriptions (6.32%). Increase in R&D for Management Plan review has been built into budget.					
PROJECTS	Project	Budget	Performance	Comments	RAG
	£ / % spend to date [Nature & Wellbeing Project]	£72,068	£66,886 / 93%	Yr 3 of 3 yr project. Expenditure on track	😊
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - GQLDF]	£150,000	£67,234 / 45%	Yr 4 of 7 yr project. Revised timeline for expenditure to take account of potential link with QH LPS. 2 nd phase additional budget released autumn 2017.	😊
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - LIS]	£400,000	£15,000 / 4%	Yr 4 of 7 yr project. Expenditure rear loaded due to planning work needed. 2 nd phase budget released autumn 2017	😊
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - LMSS]	£27,500	£17,255 / 63%	1 yr extension to deliver additional outputs.	😊
£ / % spend to date [HE-CB]	£5,286	£1,879 / 36%	Yr 3 of 3 yr project. Historic England Capacity Building Project. Expenditure rear loaded.	😊	

£ / % spend to date [Access]	£1,000	£0 / 0%	Potential miscoding through core.	😊
£ / % spend to date [Quantock Views]	£1,000	£240 / 24%		😊
£ / % spend to date [Hills to Levels]	£10,557	£8,287 / 79%	Project overran from last financial year. Budget & expenditure amended to show this.	😊
£ / % spend to date [Landscape Partnership]	£101,300	£9,382 / 9%	Funded period Nov17 – Oct19.	😊
Project Summary – A number of projects are in their final year (Nature & Wellbeing / Historic England Capacity Building / LMSS). Hills to Levels was due for full expenditure last financial year but overran. There is likely to be further applications to the SRA for similar projects.				
Summary				
Brought forward (2017/18)	£34,465	£75,792	£41,327	Viaments to £12,904 (N&W) / £3,010 (HECB) / £9,451 (LPS) / £9,100 (Amenity)
Core	£271,955	£263,922	£8,073	
Project (in-year)	£26,072	£26,868	£796	
Project – HPC (in-year)	£125,000	£125,000	£0	
Project - LPS	£96,451	£96,451	£0	
Amenity (ring-fenced)	£9,100	£9,100	£0	
	Outrun total		-£34,050	
	<i>Earmarked Reserves (redundancy)</i>		<i>£24,100</i>	
	Predicted Surplus / Deficit		-£9,950	

Paper E

To: Quantock Hills JAC
Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager
Subject: Management Plan Review

Date: 31/7/18

Management Plan Review

1. Progress

1.1 Timeline for the review

Below is the agreed timetable, currently I have a draft revised plan in chunks that is still in the process of being amended with the support of the team. I will be bringing this all together in August, along with the results of the surveys and the technical evidence where available. This will produce the consultation Draft which I will email to the Management Plan Review Group for comment before publishing the consultation draft for public comment between mid-Sep and the end of October. The consultation draft is not expected to be the finished article, and everyone – including OWG and JAC members are invited to comment at this stage. Most importantly the comments of our Local Authorities are specifically invited as this document is being revised on their behalf. The post-consultation revised draft will then come to the JAC meeting 27th November for final sign-off and subsequently go to our Local Authorities and Statutory Agencies for agreement and/or adoption as required.

Alongside this I have started the the SEA process and I am exploring the best way of achieving the Appropriate Assessment:

Strategic Environmental Assessment	<i>SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. SEA Regulations 2004.</i> Scope revised Man Plan to see if significant changes have been made. If yes carry out further assessment	Scope SEA in parallel . Final SEA based on final draft.	Natural England, Environment Agency, English Heritage
Appropriate Assessment (Habitats Regulation)	<i>Article 6.3 Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.</i> Relevant for SPA, SAC, Ramsar sites.	After final draft	Natural England

Timeline Table

Timing	Action	Who	Status
Aug/Sept 2017	Local Authorities confirm AONB Partnership to undertake Review and indicate requirements/expectations; Natural England/Defra notified of review	Local Authorities, Natural England	Done

Aug-Dec 2017	Review of existing plan: gap analysis, relevance, impacts and new trends	AONB Manager	Done
Oct/Jan 2017/18	AONB Team undertake initial appraisal of scope of Review		Done
Nov/Feb 2017/18	Consult Partnership on scope of the Review	JAC	Done MP Review Group (OWG) 30 th Jan, JAC papers and meeting 13 Feb 2018
Jan – May 2018	Review	AONB Manager /Comms Officer (engagement/surveys/technical input)	Done/ongoing
April 2018	Initial Draft of Review	AONB Manager	Done
May – July 2018	Produce Consultation Draft	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer (design, publishing), JAC/ MP Review Group (OWG)	Ongoing JAC 17 th July 2018, MP Review Group 3 rd July 2018
July 2018	Scope requirement to amend SEA and EIA	AONB Manager	Started
Sept – Oct 2018	Six week Public Consultation on revised Plan	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer	To run Sat 15 th Sept – Sun 28 th October
Nov 2018	Final Draft JAC comments and sign-off	JAC	JAC meeting 27 Nov 2018
Nov – Jan	Document designed and prepared including any final amendments/ proof-reading changes	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer, MP Review Group (OWG)	
Jan 2019	Consult Natural England on document	Natural England	
Jan-Mar 2019	Local Authorities Adopt Plan	LAs, AONB Manager	
March 2019	Plan Adopted and published	AONB Manager. Comms Officer	

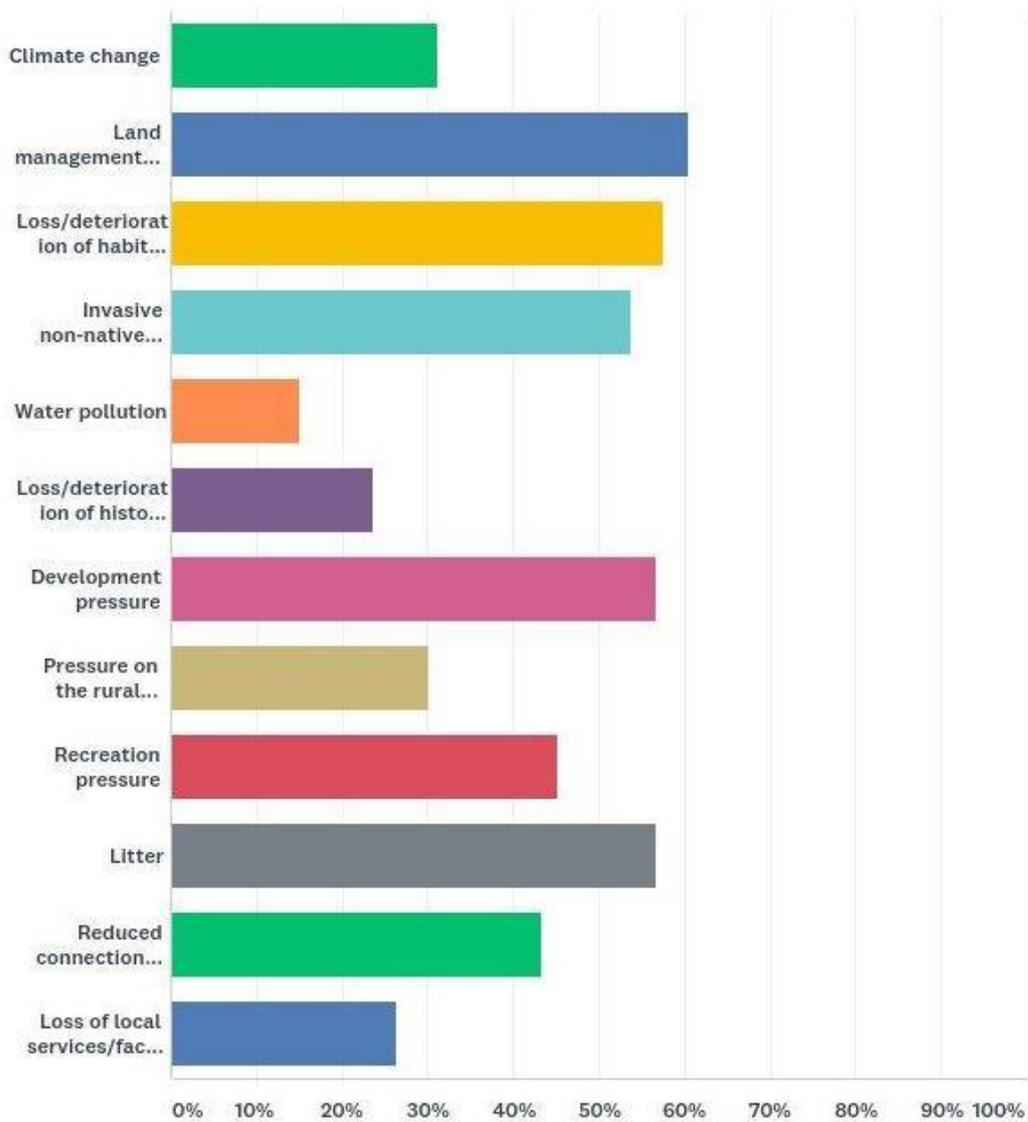
1.2 Consultation Surveys

As agreed at the last JAC meeting a simpler short survey for the wider public was produced alongside the more complex stakeholder survey and both consultations have run for June/July – they close on the day of this meeting at the end of July. Currently we have received in excess of 100 responses to the wider public survey and more complex

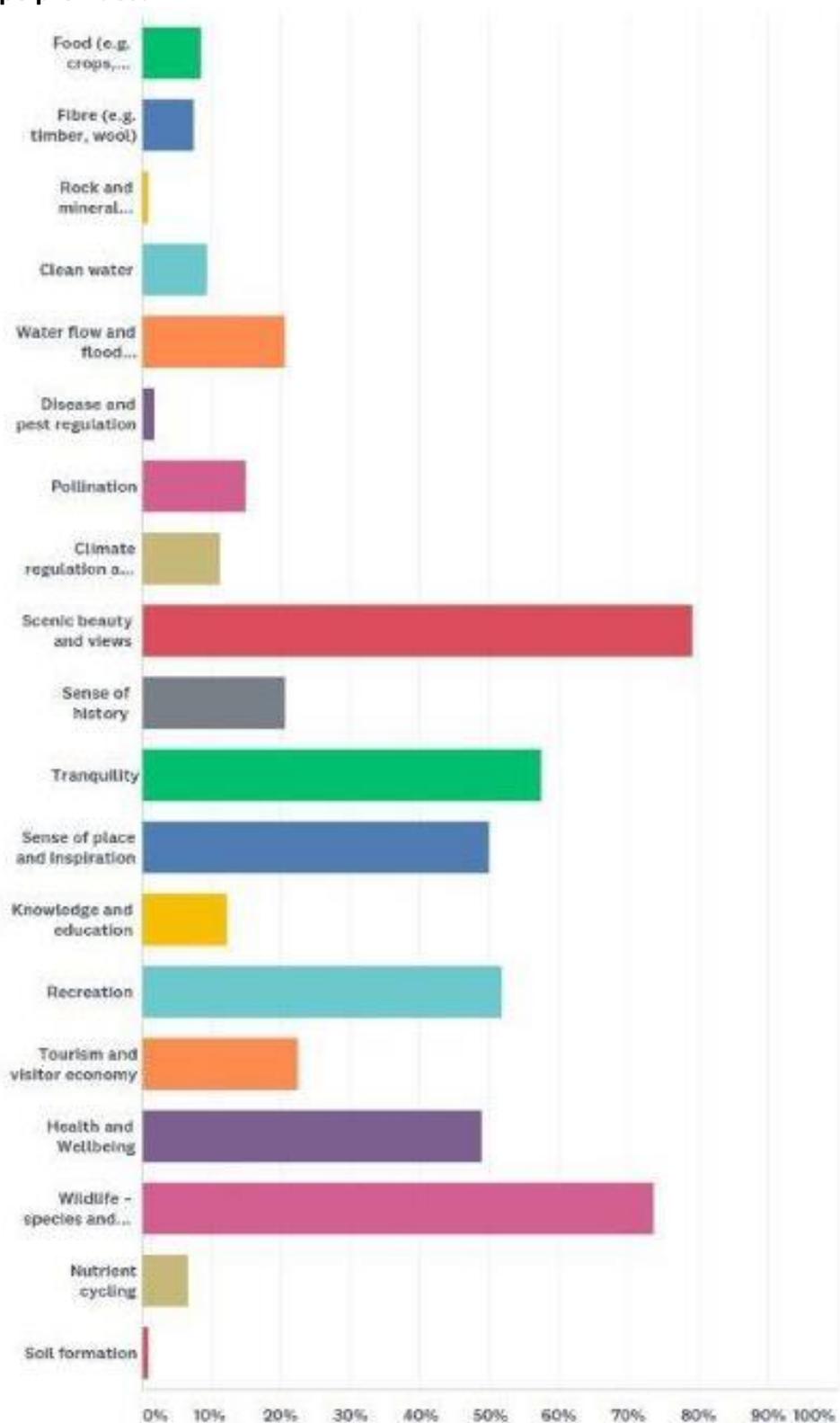
stakeholder returns are in double figures. The draft plan will be amended to accommodate these results once they are collated in early August. If you (or key colleagues) have not completed a survey yet here they both are: <https://www.quantockhills.com/gh-aonb-management-plan>

Results in so far from key questions in the simple survey show:

Q3. What do you feel are the five most important issues and changes affecting the AONB?



Q4. In your view what are the five most important public benefits that the Quantock Hills landscape provides?



1.3 Evidence Base

I have commissioned (with Iain's help) "State of the AONB" data for the Quantocks to help with trend analysis and monitoring elements of the revised plan. The stats it will provide include elements such as the % of the AONB in positive management (Woodland Grant Schemes/Higher Level Stewardship schemes etc), condition of Quantock SSSIs, population change, access opportunities and more. This will feed into the plan, with comparisons to earlier dates where available - allowing us to establish trend monitoring for key aspects of the special qualities of this AONB. The data will be available in early August and will sit alongside the Visitor/User Survey 2018 (currently being carried out on the hills for the Landscape Partnership), the Quantock upland bird survey 2018 (surveying completed – report being drafted) data and guidance from the National Association of AONBs and a number of other key sources, to form a robust evidence base for the revised plan.

1.4 Themes Structure

At the last meeting the Joint Advisory Committee advised that Management Policies should be included in the Themes sections. The proposed revised outline of these sections looks like this:

2.8 Access, Recreation and Wellbeing

Aim

That sustainable levels of access and recreation maintain widespread enjoyment of the Quantocks and contribute to public mental and physical health and wellbeing without harming landscape, historic environment, biodiversity or tranquillity

a) Significance

Access to the natural environment and public enjoyment of the AONB is a significant element of the AONB Vision, fostering a sense of importance of the area, promoting understanding and providing public benefits, particularly health and wellbeing. Landscape and wildlife protection continues to be ...

b) Opportunities and Threats

Heavy recreational use in the AONB continues to take place in the sensitive upland areas, based on parking locations on or adjacent to Quantock Common. Public transport to these sites is not available and visitors step out of their cars straight into a sensitive Site of Special Scientific Interest where ...

c) Objective

ARW1: To provide high quality public access in appropriate areas of the Quantocks, promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of recreation in an AONB while minimising any environmental impacts.

d) Management Policies

ARWP1: To ensure public access areas, Rights of Way and promoted routes are useable and maintained to a high standard

ARWP2: To reduce user conflict and limit damage to rights of way and landscape quality from recreational uses including off-road driving

ARWP3: To maintain practical AONB staff on the ground to support volunteers, manage Rights of Way misuse and reduce access problems such as sheep worrying and summer fires

The Delivery Plan which forms Appendix 1 of the Management Plan will then include smart Actions based on the Management Policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC supports the Management Plan Review progress and timeline described in the report**

Chris Edwards
July 2018