



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)

on

Tuesday 21st July 2020

at


2.15pm

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, Amanda Sampson at asampson@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 previous minutes There were no minutes from the last meeting - Tuesday 21st April 2020, as it was cancelled due to Coronavirus with papers only sent out.
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 - Team and Partnership Update (Chris Edwards)
7.	Paper B - Nature & Wellbeing Project Update and Final Report (Kristen Lambert)
8.	Paper C - Nature Recovery Plan Scoping Presentation (Iain Porter)
9.	Paper D - Planning Report (Alex Meletiou)
10.	Paper E - Finance Report (Iain Porter)
11.	Paper F - Business Plan 2020-21 response to Covid19 (Iain Porter)
12.	AOB Proposed dates for upcoming meetings (TBC) JAC meetings: (all start at 2.15pm locations TBC) Tuesday 20 th October 2020 Tuesday 26 th January 2021 Tuesday 20 th April 2021 Tuesday 20 th July 2021 Officer Working Group meetings: (all start at 10.00am at Fyne Court, Broomfield) Tuesday 6 th October 2020 Tuesday 12 th January 2021 Tuesday 30 th March 2021 Tuesday 6 th July 2021

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held at North Petherton Bowling Club on **Tuesday 21st January 2020**.

Present:

Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew – Chair (ATB)	- Somerset West & Taunton Council (SWT)
Chris Edwards (CE)	- Quantock Hills AONB Service
Iain Porter (IP)	- Quantock Hills AONB Service
Alan Bradford (AB)	- Sedgemoor District Council (SDC)
Hugh Davies (HD)	- Somerset West & Taunton (SWT/SCC)
Julian Taylor (JT)	- North Petherton Town Council (JAC Rep)
Dixie Darch (DD)	- Somerset West & Taunton (SWT)
Nick Salter (NS)	- Forestry England (FE)
Philip Comer (PC)	- Friends of Quantock
Jo Chesworth (JC)	- Natural England

Also Present:

Kristen Lambert (KL) - AONB Nature & Wellbeing Officer, Verity Jones (VJ) - AONB Volunteer Coordinator, Alex Meletiou (AM) - QH Landscape Planning Officer, Mike Copleston (MC) - Holford Parish Council, Alan Hughes (AH) - Friends of Quantock, Thomas Mansfield (TM) - FWAG South West.

Amanda Sampson (AS) - QH Communications & Support Officer (note taker).

1. Apologies:

Charlotte Russell (Historic England), Mike Caswell (Vice Chair & SDC), Laetitia Kelly (Friends of Quantock), Jo Pearson (Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council) and Hugh Warmington (Country Land & Business - CLA), Hugh Davies (SWT/SCC).

2. Declarations of Interest:

ATB - declared himself to be a member of Quantock Eco, Friends of Quantock, Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group, Quantock Stag Hounds and a Quantock Landowner.

3. Accuracy of the minutes for the previous meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2019 at Holford Village Hall (copy appended).

Nick Salter (Forestry England) and Philip Comer (Friends of Quantock) were added to the list of attendees for the previous meeting and the minutes were signed off as a true representation of the meeting.

Matters Arising:

6.2 - CE confirmed that something coming from Justin at SALC very soon with reference to the election of the new Parish Council representatives.

7.2 - Question about fly tipping, is there any progress with contacting agencies to try and combat this issue as this does seem to be an increasing problem.

CE - Our Ranger Andy Stevenson is a member on the Somerset Waste Partnership Fly tipping working group working to tackle this issue.

4. Public Question Time:

MC Holford Parish Council - concerns in the village about the increasing speed in the lanes in and around the village, the parish council are now in process of researching how to get the lanes designated as 'Quiet Lanes' via Somerset County Council, as Highway Authority. They will be writing to all parish councils around the AONB about this to gauge interest in support and would also like to work with the AONB on this and will keep the AONB informed.

ATB - wonders what changes can they make if they do become Quiet Lanes.

CE - this was talked about in previous management plans, but there were concerns over putting more signs up and Quiet Lanes does not impose an enforceable speed limit.

JT - is there funding in place for the new signs. MC - there is allocated money to do it, this is down to the county councils to bid for the money through the relevant highways scheme.

CE - asked to be kept informed about this.

5. Paper A - Team and Partnership Report (Chris Edwards)

5.1 Team

CE - welcomed Verity to the Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills AONB teams as the new Volunteer Coordinator as of the start of January. Anthony also welcomed Verity.

CE - the recruitment advert is now live for the new Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager. Although Bill has worked very hard over the past two years on this project, Iain has also driven this project for the past 6 years and Chris wanted to acknowledge Iain's hard work on this.

IP - Although confirmation came in December 2019 about the success of the bid, the formal announcement only went live in January 2020. The advert for the new LPS Manager position is now active until the beginning of February with interviews to be held 25th February. The rest of the LPS team will be recruited shortly afterwards. Iain is hopeful that April 2020 will be the official start of the LPS Scheme with all team members in place and ready to start.

Paul Trolly (PT) - Broomfield Parish Council have an interest in the scheme in respect of Broomfield Common and would like to see a copy of the confirmed Woodland Management Plan. (IP to get a copy of this to PT).

PT - also concerns over the amount of work that will need doing and only currently having 3 volunteers, including himself volunteering in Broomfield.

IP - the LPS team will be recruiting more volunteer teams and training them to help with the projects.

5.2 Partnership

CE - ELMS Project, Thomas Mansfield (TM) from FWAG-SW (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) has started work for us on our ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) Test & Trails Project as the Project Facilitator.

TM from FWAG-SW gave a brief update on the 18 month ELMS Project and promoted the launch event, Tuesday 11th February.

CE - JAC members are invited to the launch which is particularly targeted at Quantock farmers and landowners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC considers, amends and agrees the updated Constitution and Sol attached, subject to parent authority agreements**
- 2. The JAC notes the report – Noted**

6. Paper B - Landscape Planning Report (Alex Meletiou)

AM - briefly went through his report on the Quantock Hills Landscape Planning over the past 6 months. No questions or issues raised.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC notes the report - Noted**

7. Paper C - Quantock Hills AONB Finance & Funding (Iain Porter)

7.1 Finance

IP - went through the papers for the current financial year.

Somerset Public Health provided an additional £10,000 towards the AONBs Nature & Wellbeing Project in September 2019. This will mean the project will be extended to April / May 2020.

ELMS Test & Trails Project referred to by Chris has gone live, but this does not show in the budgets as expenditure is claimed retrospectively. First claim due April 2020.

Expenditure in Transport & vehicle budget is high due to ongoing repair issue with one of the Ranger vehicles. Additional costs include hire of replacement vehicle and insurance... Skanska and Toyota are disputing responsibility over non-identification of a fault with the vehicle, but AONB Service are hoping to recoup losses from them. Somerset County Councils Fleet Department have been very helpful in the matter.

Overall the core (revenue) is expected to have slightly higher spend than anticipated. Reserves will be used to cover the overspend.

Projects – the Nature & Wellbeing project is on track. Landscape Partnership Scheme overspent but this was anticipated and will be met from reserves. HPC Landscape Improvement Scheme underspent because a contract at Ramscombe has slipped due to wet weather, meaning the contractors are behind with their workload.

2020/2021 Budget, each January the AONB Service applies to Defra for its annual grant. Defra has not released its grant settlement for National Parks and AONBs, though they hope to do so by the end of March. This has meant figure in budget for Defra is estimate based on previous years settlement. Core expenditure has gone up but will be met from reserves. This is due in part to office / depot leases up for renewal in March and also vehicle leases up for renewal in May. Slight change in the presentation of figures after input from SCC finance team, but hopefully this will make the figures more understandable in future.

Julian Taylor and Mandy Chilcott have been put forward for the new finance & funding Working Group, but ideally another 1 person would be required from the JAC or OWG. Anthony put himself forward for this. IP - looking for this to take place over the next year with inception meeting in April.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) The Quantock Hills JAC note the Q3 finance report. – Noted**
- 2) The JAC agree the submission of budgets as detailed to Defra in support of the Quantock Hills AONB Grant Application. – Agreed**

8. Paper D - Nature & Wellbeing Update (Kristen Lambert)

KL - gave an update on the Nature & Wellbeing Project that has been running since 2016, funded by Somerset Public Health and hosted by the Quantock Hills AONB. Managed by the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the project also worked in partnership with the Blackdown and Mendip Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to provide opportunities for county wide engagement. The project aimed to tackle some of the barriers that prevent groups and individuals experiencing the health and wellbeing benefits that Somerset's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty offer. The Project supported people to access these high-quality natural spaces, with a particular focus on supporting mental wellbeing and physical activity, working with groups and individuals who may benefit from such engagement. Project activities focused both on linking people to existing provision and setting up new activities and events.

KL - Since January 2019, after returning from Maternity Leave, project has moved more from delivery to ensuring legacy of the project. One success from 2018 has been the 'Does Happiness Grow on Trees' project. Participants were encouraged to enter artwork through a competition which has subsequently been displayed at The Museum of Somerset. The youngest participant was 6 and the eldest being 85. An auction was held to sell a piece of artwork that had been entered and this money will go back into the project. It is envisaged that 6 or 7 of the groups will continue to run after Kristen leaves her post around May/June 2020.

Another key aspect of work that took place in the projects final year was establishing the Somerset Nature and Wellbeing Network. Made up of nature-based delivery teams/individuals as well as some working in the health sector in Somerset - the network plans to meet 4 times a year (2 gatherings have already taken place in 2019 with over 30 in attendance at both) and have agreed their purpose and initial actions.

ATB - congratulated Kristen on a great job.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC notes the report – Noted.**

9. Paper E - Constitution & Statement of Intent (Chris Edwards)

Tracked changed version of the Quantock Hills JAC Constitution & Terms of Reference and the Statement of Intent were presented.

AB - Friends of Quantock are missing from the Constitution document.

CE - apologies for this, as a core funder Friends of Quantock should be on it and CE will add Friends of Quantock. No further questions or comments were made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The JAC considers, amends and agrees the updated Constitution and Sol attached, subject to parent authority agreements – To include Friends of Quantock. All other changes and amendments agreed.

10. Presentation - Quantock Landscape Schemes Update (Iain Porter)

IP - gave an update on the Quantock Landscape Schemes.

In October 2014 the Quantock Hills AONB Service launched a number of schemes which aimed to deliver landscape enhancement across the affected area associated with the new Nuclear Power Station development, Hinkley Point C. These schemes are delivered on behalf of the partners, EDF Energy, Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset West & Taunton Council. The scheme started back in 2014 but went live in 2015.

Since its launch in October 2014 the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (GQLDF) has supported 48 projects throughout the affected area. The fund is available to farmers, landowners, community groups or businesses who wish to apply for grants to undertake small scale landscape improvements.

Due to the demand on the fund in June 2019 the maximum grant amount was reduced to £5,000. A key success of the fund is the support in project development provided by the Quantock Hills AONB Service. The GQLDF fund has supported the planting of 2.2km of new native species hedge and the traditional management of a further 3.8km of hedgerow. 8 Projects have planted 207 orchard trees, of which 5 projects are on historic orchard sites from tithe map times. 2,400m² of ponds have been restored through the GQLDF, not just farm ponds but also stock ponds. Nearly 11Ha of new wildflower meadows have been sown over 6 projects. Over 1,100 new native standard trees have been planted, these will become the veteran trees of the future ensuring the high quality landscape of the Quantock Hills and Vale remain beautiful.

11. AOB

AB - as North Petherton Town Mayor expressed his thanks to the JAC for holding this meeting in the North Petherton Bowling Club, which is a lovely new building with a hard working group who look after it.

CE - Under the Colchester Agreement, all AONB's have pledged to immediately adopt a species on the JNCC Priority Species list, to prepare and delivery a Species Action Plan (SAP) with the aim that across the English AONBs at least 30 species will be taken off the list by 2030. We have Barbastelle Bats on the Quantock Hills, which are nationally rare, so we have chosen the Barbastelle Bat and we have just recently learnt that the Barbastelle Bat has been chosen as Bat of the year 2020-2021, so what great timing!

Meeting closed at 15.50pm

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 21st April 2020 (location TBC)



Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee 21st July 2020

On-line meeting under Covid 19 restrictions

AONB Team and Partnership Report.

1. Team

In my report for the April 21st JAC meeting earlier this year, which was reduced to papers only with no meeting, I went into some detail about the Covid 19 measures we were taking. I will briefly update that information:

We shut the office on Tuesday 17th March and began working from home, with Rangers Andy and Owen continuing to check our Exmoor ponies on Cothelstone Hill daily and put out necessary signs - alongside basic whole hills patrolling. We produced new Covid19 specific Risk Assessments for Ranger activities and visiting/using the office and team members' risk status and childcare issues were identified and accommodated at this stage. Volunteers were stood down and all face-to-face activity ceased, including Nature and Wellbeing groups facilitated by Kristen. New Volunteer Coordinator Verity Jones has had a challenging start in this role; however she has been making the most of the opportunity to ensure the relevant data, lists, RAs etc are all in order while starting to get to know our volunteers in a socially distanced world. Taking into account strong demand from a number of volunteers and under strictly controlled conditions Verity restarted selected forms of volunteering towards the end of May and this has been both appreciated by volunteers and valuable to our work.

These arrangements have worked satisfactorily for the AONB Team, the weakness of Fyne Court's broadband meant we were all geared-up and fairly familiar with home-working, however the inability to get out on the hills, the point of all our work, has been strange over the last 17 weeks. We set-up a weekly 'Teams' team meeting on alternating days to ensure everyone could be involved – we each give an update on what we are doing and how we are coping, and we share any relevant info such as funding and Covid 19 updates.

On the business front contact has been maintained with major funders Defra and Heritage Lottery to ensure we are agreed on what is achievable. Iain has developed a revised CV19 Business Plan for this year (attached) adapted to the impacts we are aware of so far.

Among many adaptations we have made during this period Amanda has been producing a fortnightly Covid 19 newsletter (see attached) for the Quantocks and Blackdowns to keep contact with the interested public, Kristen has been going out of her way to maintain contact with her most vulnerable service users, the Rangers have been addressing

whatever has emerged on the hills in this strange time, and Iain has been working day and night to keep our risk assessments specific, relevant and SCC-Approved.

The resilience of team members has been truly exemplary during this challenging experience, all have worked supportively, both of each other and of those we provide services for, without complaint or drama.

2. Partnership

Teams JAC meeting in a week's time, 21st July 14:15.

Bill has been moving the Landscape Partnership Scheme forward impressively with contracts for Evaluation, a LiDAR survey, and education co-ordinator being let, the first board meeting held, recruitment for a Landscape Partnership Project Support Officer underway: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/our-vacancies/job-details/?jobId=1583>. The formal public consultation under s38 of the Commons Act 2006 for the Crowcombe Park Gate car park project is open for another 2 weeks or so; this is the final consent needed for this project.

Our partnership with Mendip and Blackdown AONBs and the Somerset Wildlife Trust to fund and run a Nature and Wellbeing follow on project called Somerset Nature Connections has been successful in its bid to the National Lottery for £290k and Somerset County Council for match funding of £40k. The current Nature and Wellbeing Project finishes at the end of next month, and work on Somerset Nature Connections - held up by Covid 19 restrictions - is starting to get underway. Staff will be hosted by the Somerset Wildlife Trust and recruitment for the Project Manager is live: <https://www.somersetwildlife.org/jobs/somerset-nature-connections-project-manager>. This £500k three-year project is a more comprehensive and in-depth development of our current project, it is intended to be an exemplar of Nature and Wellbeing work made even more relevant for many by the pandemic experience. Each partner has committed to providing £6000 per annum as a part of the funding package, to be sourced where possible from external funding bodies.

Iain and I have been collaborating nationally and regionally with protected landscapes on the developing Nature Recovery Plans, Iain has produced a scoping report for our work, this is attached and included as an agenda item for discussion.

The Environmental Land Management test/trial for Defra is currently going forward in a restricted format under Defra guidelines, we hope it will still produce information of value to inform a future nationwide Land Management Scheme. Thomas Mansfield from FWAG has been contracted to facilitate this work for us and the first virtual workshop, which was with the steering group of experienced agri-environment practitioners took place successfully on Wed 8th July. A virtual webinar and workshop with local farmers/landowners is planned for Wed 22nd July and the spacial framework (mapping) work identifying natural capital for the Quantock trial is underway.

3. Recommendations

- 1 The JAC supports the Covid19 actions taken described in this report
- 2 The JAC endorses the £6000 pa partner contribution to the Somerset Nature Connections Project
- 3 The JAC notes the report

Chris Edwards

July 2020





Quantock Hills AONB Nature Recovery Plan.

Scoping Paper. July 2020. Version 1.0

Chris Edwards and Iain Porter.

National Association of AONBs – Nature Recovery Plan Framework (March 2019)

We are part of nature. The better the natural function of the ecosystems we live in and rely on, the higher our quality of life. Humankind relies on nature; our wellbeing and our future is intrinsically intertwined with nature's fate. It provides the raw materials for our lives on this planet; it provides spiritual and cultural meaning and our part in maintaining healthy ecosystems underpins our sense of purpose. The utility value of nature to us is incalculable, but it is invaluable in its own right. The extent to which we have modified and affected ecosystems is becoming apparent: it is time to reverse those trends.

Nature Recovery Plans are a key commitment of the [Colchester Declaration](#), made by the country's AONBs in 2019. They aim to engage partners and inspire and inform positive action, to conserve what remains and reinstate what's been lost.

The plans relate to AONB Management Plans as a spatial expression of our shared vision for beautiful, resilient landscapes rich in wildlife. Habitat and species recovery are addressed at a landscape scale; they also inspire and guide nature-friendly land management decisions at any place in these landscapes. AONB Management Plan policies and objectives already support their implementation, and the AONB family will strive to ensure incentives such as ELMS are a key part of resourcing positive change in our landscapes.

AONB Nature Recovery Plans will relate to land outside the protected landscape boundaries. Where AONBs share a boundary, they will link across it. Elsewhere they will relate to the ecology beyond our boundaries. Their compilation will inform process and help gather data relevant to the later development of county-scale Local Nature Recovery Strategies which will be a statutory duty on Local Authorities arising from the Environment Act.

AONB Nature Recovery Plans will be co-created with a wide range of stakeholders across the landowning and conservation sectors and the wider community.

1. Introduction

- a. A Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) builds upon much of the work undertaken by the Quantock Hills AONB Service through previous Management Plan reviews, it will hone down biodiversity elements of a resilient ecological landscape into their own dedicated plan. The Quantock Hills AONB has a proud history of landscape-scale nature conservation delivery through its staff team and local partners such as landowners, Quantock Commoners Association, Natural England and other organisations.
- b. While this work when considered in its sum is significant it does not fully mitigate against the loss of nature and biodiversity throughout the Quantock Hills and does not consider areas beyond its boundary. The State of Nature Reports by the National Biodiversity Network have year on year assessed the abundance and distribution of 5,942 species across England. In 2019 the headline findings were stark, since 1970 the distribution of 31% of species has declined and there has been a 3% decrease in abundance in the last 10-years alone.
- c. In July 2019 the Quantock Hills AONB committed to the Colchester Declaration and has prioritised the production and delivery of a Nature Recovery Plan. The plan will become a key part of the statutory AONB Management Plan and will engage existing and new partners to ensure it reflects the needs of biodiversity not only within the AONB but also on the boundary and in the formation of biodiversity corridors or networks linking habitats across the country.

2. Policy Context

- a. [A Green Future: A 25-year Plan to Improve the Environment](#) , launched in 2018 it was a bold pledge by the Government to ‘leave nature in a better state than we found it’. A main thrust of the plan is nature recovery, through the formation of networks taking forward a key component of the Lawton report.
- b. [Intergovernmental Panel report on Biodiversity and Climate Change](#). From 2002 the first report identified the impact of climate change on biodiversity especially the ability of habitats and species to adapt or migrate.
- c. [Biodiversity 2020](#) A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services. The strategy built on the National Ecosystems Assessment of 2011 identifying the link between healthy ecosystems and resilient habitats, it was the first strategy where Government committed to halt overall biodiversity loss within a decade.
- d. [The Colchester Declaration](#) – A pledge by AONBs to embed activity that will lead to nature recovery, make meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation and increase opportunities for people to make a positive emotional connection to nature.

- e. [Protected Landscape Review](#) Sometimes referred to as the ‘Glover’ review, the Government’s assessment of the value of protected landscapes to today’s society. The review praised the work of the network of AONB’s but challenged AONB Partnership to do more for nature and for people.
- f. [Environment Bill](#) – mandating Local Nature Recovery Strategies to be prepared for each local authority area. Our NRPs may pave the way to good LNRs when they are required by law; the AONB NRP process could involve most if not all of the relevant partners.
- g. [Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan](#) which already set out targets and actions for nature recovery
- h. Somerset West and Taunton [Garden Town](#) vision and design guidance that will interact with the Quantock Hills Nature Recovery Plan and be key for formation of habitat corridors and stepping stones.
- i. Sedgemoor District Council [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#) identifies current GI and set out policies to protect it. There will be linkages with the Quantock Hills Nature Recovery Plan especially in respect of habitat corridors and stepping stones.

3. Nature Recovery Plan - role & purpose

- a. The Nature Recovery Plan will be instrumental in contributing to the delivery of the nature recovery goals within the 25-year Plan and will set out the ‘roadmap’ for how the Quantock Hills AONB can achieve the pledges made within the Colchester Declaration (appendix 1).
- b. The plan will set out the strategic approach to nature recovery both within the AONB and beyond its boundary including corridors and stepping stones of high nature value habitat.
- c. The plan will set out how the Quantock Hills can maximise benefits for both nature and people, assessing the value of ecosystem services.
- d. It will be the focal point for the Partnership and wider communities to agree how to improve nature
- e. The plan will provide a spatial representation of the AONB Management Plan policies allowing greater interpretation of the landscape
- f. The plan will be used by all interested parties providing important guidance for a wide range of other activities that affect nature recovery in AONBs including discharge of NERC, NPPF, Local Plans and land holding management plans.
- g. Direct the targeted investment in nature through multiple sources to maximise benefits.

4. Guiding Principals

- a. The plan should be based on a 25-year life cycle, with a 5-year action plan which is aligned with the statutory AONB Management Plan review cycles.
- b. The plan needs to be Integrated with the National Nature Recovery Network and the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- c. The plans overarching aim is Nature Recovery, but where possible should look to achieve wider ecosystem services e.g. carbon capture, natural flood management, pollination, climate change resilience, enhance landscape character.
- d. Take account of and be designed around Lawton's principals of bigger, better and more joined up.
- e. Be collaborative at its core
- f. The plan needs to be inclusive, aiming to move all land managers along a spectrum of positions ranging from intensive to more extensive habitats. The plan also needs to engage a wider range of people to increase the

5. Quantock Nature Recovery Plan – Proposed Content

While the table below sets out the proposed content for the Nature Recovery Plan it will be important to ask questions that will continually guide development and evolution of this plan, including:

- What habitats/wildlife should we prioritise?
- Where should we target our resources?
- How much land is needed to create resilient and functioning ecosystems for nature?
- What shape, configuration and proximity should the habitat blocks be to one another?
- What do people want and need to from nature, particularly future generations?

Section	What needs to be done	Who else will be involved	Inputs needed
Definitions	1) Review of current definitions and use (see appendix 2 for draft definitions) 2) Agreement on use of plan – primary use nature with secondary uses for landscape, green infrastructure, natural capital / public goods / ecosystem services.	Land owners and land managers / Local authority partners / NE	Consensus of what is in scope in AONB Nature Recovery Plans

Vision	<p>Define (and visualise) our vision for nature recovery in the Quantock Hills AONB.</p> <p>Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24. Vision: Biodiversity is protected and enhanced through positive management and increased connectivity between key wildlife habitats across the whole Quantock landscape and beyond</p>	All stakeholders	Links with LNP, LA's Green Infrastructure Strategy's.
State of nature in the AONB	<p>Status and condition of sites, habitats and species within the AONB; their significance within regional, national and international contexts; trends and pressures.</p> <p>Highlight data and evidence issues and gaps that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Appendices 3 and 4 identifies the broad habitat types in the Quantock Hills AONB.</p> <p>Appendix 5 identifies species data current available to the Quantock Hills AONB.</p>	<p>NE, EA, FC and Wildlife Trusts with peer review from advisors/ecologists.</p> <p>Local Record Centres.</p>	<p>Quantock Hills – State of the AONB report. Somerset State of nature reports. Source and analyse NE and local data e.g. favourable condition status.</p>
Statement of priorities for nature	<p>Agree which sites, habitats and species to prioritise, within and between geographically connected AONBs.</p> <p>Habitats – heathland / upland oak woods / broadleaf woodland / species rich grassland</p> <p>Species – bird assemblages (heath / wood) / Barbastelle bat / dormouse / Brown hairstreak butterfly</p>	<p>NE, EA, FC and Wildlife Trusts with peer review from advisors/ecologists.</p> <p>Local Record Centres.</p> <p>Blackdown Hills AONB / Exmoor National Trust</p>	<p>Information on nationally accepted principles for identifying priorities and setting targets for habitats and species (see old LBAP guidance).</p>

<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Strategy, priorities and targets for expanding and linking priority areas for nature</p> <p>Agreement of minimum area required to create functioning and resilient ecosystems within landscape</p> <p>A spatial map that identifies existing priority areas and areas for recovering and enhancing nature to realise the targets.</p> <p>Where possible, demonstration of delivery of wider benefits from nature recovery (eg. landscape character improvements, carbon sequestration and flood mitigation) and promoting greater connectivity between people and areas of habitat.</p>	<p>NE, EA, FC, WT and Wildlife Trusts with peer review from advisors/ecologists.</p> <p>Local Record Centres.</p> <p>Natural England and other national experts.</p> <p>GIS experts.</p> <p>Other stakeholders.</p>	<p>National Habitat Network Map. AONB Management Plan. Natural capital maps (through ELMS T&T). Landscape character assessments. Other targeting approaches e.g. BOAs and B-lines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species / habitat modelling • Spatial prioritisation • Rules for the design of the network
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Delivery	<p>Indicative costs for realising nature recovery.</p> <p>Identify the opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing potential investment streams Reviewing success or otherwise of existing restoration approaches Assessing opportunities for integrated environmental delivery Setting out practical support that may be needed around engagement, advice, holding management plans, contractors, plant sourcing, site and wider infrastructure 	<p>NE, land management advisers, land managers, agro-economists</p> <p>Delivery and funding partners.</p> <p>Land managers.</p> <p>LNPs, LEPS, NIAs.</p> <p>Local authorities.</p>	<p>Estimation of land values.</p> <p>Costs of above and below ground habitat creation / restoration establishment and maintenance including regenerative agriculture approaches.</p> <p>Further detail on emerging investment streams: ELMs, Net gain, Green Investment opportunities.</p> <p>Information on national and local plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm clusters Protected site management Public estate Flood management Tree planting Funding campaign <p>Statutory local plans</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	<p>Propose landscape scale evaluation approach and targets.</p> <p>Detailed approach to site-specific monitoring outside plan scope but to include guidance on site-specific monitoring in context of landscape character and targets.</p> <p>Link to metrics for 25YEP and biodiversity strategy</p>	<p>NE, EA, FC, WT and Wildlife Trusts with peer review from advisors/ecologists.</p> <p>Local Record Centres.</p>	<p>Information on existing and developing monitoring frameworks for AONB Management Plans, county nature recovery strategies, ELMs, landscape partnership schemes etc.</p>

6. Potential Approaches to NRP creation.

There are several approaches to the creation of a Nature Recovery Plan for the Quantock Hills.

- a. Undertaken within existing AONB Service team. This approach will require staff resource being diverted from existing work-streams. Cash cost will be very limited, possibly some data will need to be purchased.
- b. Undertaken within existing AONB Service team with specialised contracts to undertake specific elements of the plan. A half and half approach with the bulk of the plan being written by staff from the AONB Service and expert consultants (Ecologist, GIS) brought in to undertake specific elements of the work. Reduced staff resource than option (a) but will incur some cash costs estimated at £1,500 - 2,500.
- c. Quantock Hills specific contract. Release a contract for plan to be developed and written by external consultant(s). This will massively reduce AONB Service staff input but will require budget for consultant costs. Rough estimate £5,000 - £10,000.
- d. Joint contract with other protected landscapes. The three main AONB's of Somerset jointly commission consultants to partially or wholly develop Nature Recovery Plans. There would be benefits in terms of economies of scale (e.g. consultants only have to buy one dataset covering the 3 AONBs) as well as a commonality of approach which will increase likelihood of supporting the Local Nature Recovery Strategies. It may be possible that the AONBs can undertake some work by sharing staff resources with consultants being used to completed specialist tasks such as data analysis or GIS.

7. Recommendation

- a. The AONB Service and other partners in the JAC have a good history of biodiversity and nature related work. It would seem prudent to retain a degree of ownership in the development of the Nature Recovery Plan.
- b. The AONB Service has already undertaken significant amounts of collaboration with other neighbouring protected landscapes and other partners. There is a desire to work together to reduce duplication and to ensure plans have a degree of commonality allowing greater access by other organisations / agencies.
- c. The AONB Service is proposing that the development of the Nature Recovery Plan is led by an officer from the AONB Service with additional work commissioned to other partners, such as Somerset Wildlife Trust or external specialists. This approach will ensure ownership of the plan is retained by the AONB and is developed in collaboration with relevant local and national partners.
- d. It is recommended that a budget of £3,000, to be drawn from reserves, is allocated to this work.

8. Timescale and Milestones:

a. In order to meet the pledge from the Colchester Declaration the AONB Service is proposing the following timeline.

Activity	2020			2021			
	Qu2	Qu3	Qu4	Qu1	Qu2	Qu3	Qu4
Produce NRP scoping paper							
Partnership agreement on approach for producing NRP							
Collate required datasets							
Consultation and agreement on Vision							
Consultation on habitats and species to be included							
Drafting of NRP							
Consultation on draft NRP							
Amendments to draft							
Final draft approved by partnership							

Appendix 1: Colchester Declaration - pledges

The following pledges were made by the network of AONBs in July 2019 as a response to the Climate and Nature Emergencies. The Quantock Hills AONB signed up to these pledges.

By July 2020:

- 1) To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotion connection with nature.
- 2) To prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB

By 2024

- 1) To embed an ecosystem services approach into all AONB Management Plans
- 2) To ensure all AONB Management Plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero

By 2030

- 1) That at least 200,000Ha of SSSI in AONBs will be in favourable condition
- 2) That at least 100,000Ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created / restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals
- 3) That at least 36,000Ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principals of the right tree in the right place
- 4) That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030.

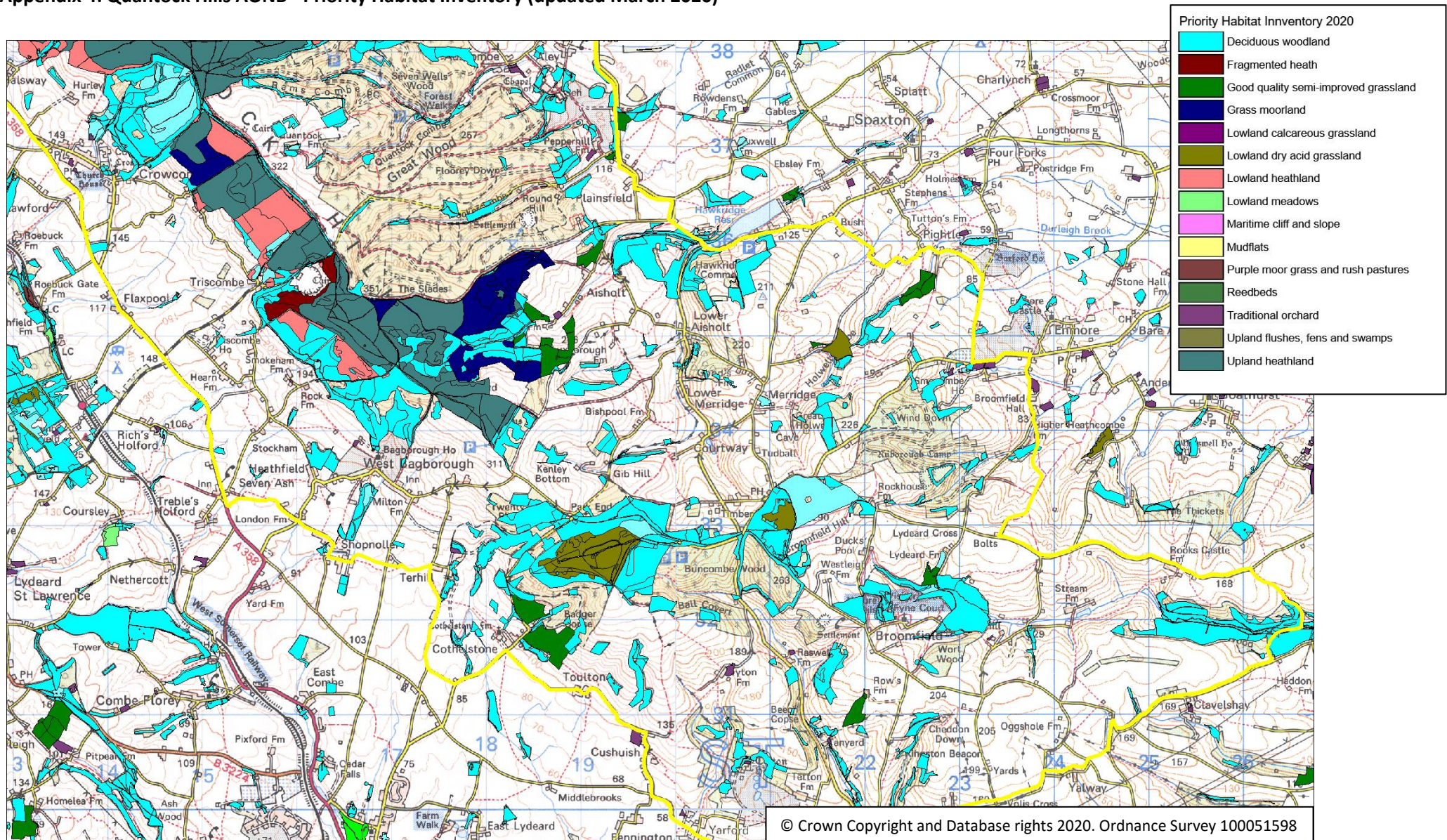
Appendix 2: Definitions A place-based approach	Identifying projects that are important in the context of a particular place, for example in the AONB this might include a settlement, community or, perhaps, a landscape character area.
Biodiversity	The diversity of living organisms, whether at the genetic, species or ecosystem level
Ecosystem Approach	An ecosystem approach provides a framework for looking at whole ecosystems in decision making and for valuing the services they provide, to ensure society can maintain a healthy and resilient natural environment. It can operate at a range of spatial scales to ensure that the right actions are taken to deliver the right, lasting outcomes. In general terms, an ecosystem approach is designed to deliver biodiversity action at a larger scale than a single species or habitat and takes account of the needs of people at the same time.
Ecosystem Resilience	A resilient ecosystem is an ecosystem that is healthy and functions in a way that is able to address pressures and demands placed on it. There are five attributes of resilience: 1) increasing diversity 2) increasing ecosystem extent through reducing fragmentation 3) increasing connectivity within and between ecosystems 4) improved condition 5) increasing adaptability Biodiversity underpins this resilience.
Ecosystem Services	The services that humans gain from the natural world. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting services - necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, such as soil formation, nutrients cycling and primary production. These are all underpinned by biodiversity. Provisioning services - such as crops, fish, timber and genetic material. These comprise natural fluxes of energy. • Regulating services - such as water and air purification; noise regulation, flood risk management, waste assimilation, carbon sequestration and pollination. • Cultural services - provide a source of aesthetic, spiritual, religious, recreational or scientific enrichment, health and wellbeing benefits.
Habitat Connectivity	Habitat connectivity is a measure of the relative ease with which typical species can move through the landscape between patches of habitat. Habitat loss and fragmentation can reduce the size of populations and hinder the movement of individuals between increasingly isolated populations, threatening their long-term viability.
Lawton Principals	Published in the 2010 Making Space for Nature report, chaired by Prof Sir John Lawton, the Lawton principals are often summarised as 'Bigger, better, more and more joined up'.
Landscape Scale approach	Operating across a geographical area that is recognised by a variety of communities and organisations as a landscape. The identity of a landscape arises through historical, social, cultural and environmental factors. Landscapes tend to be large scale (crossing river catchments and administrative boundaries). The Quantock Hills AONB includes 12 Landscape Character types and forms part of 2 National Character Areas.

Local Plan / Core Strategy	An integrated plan for new housing allocations, affordable housing, employment land requirements and planning obligations which contribute to environmental, social and economic initiatives consistent with the AONB designation.
Multiple benefits and biodiversity	Biodiversity underpins a healthy natural environment. The natural world, its biodiversity and constituent ecosystems are essential to human well-being both directly and indirectly through the multiple benefits provided in supporting the functioning of ecosystems.
Natural Capital	Natural capital is the stock of natural resources within any given area which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms. Some natural capital assets provide people with free goods and services, often called ecosystem services. Two of these (clean water and fertile soil) underpin our economy and society, and thus make human life possible
Nature	All living organisms and the ecological complexes (including non-living elements and processes) of which they are part. It includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems; the resilience of ecosystems; the services they provide to society and the way in which humans interact with nature.
Nature Recovery	Addressing underlying causes of biodiversity loss by putting nature at the heart of our decision-making, by increasing the resilience of our natural systems (ecosystems), and by taking specific action for habitats and species.
Nature Recovery Networks	Identification of priority geographical area for nature recovery that link habitats allowing connection and migration of species and also connect communities with nature.
Local Nature Recovery Strategies	Through the Environment Bill there will be a duty on each local planning authority to create a 'Local Nature Recovery Strategy'. These will allow better spatial planning for nature and support the Net Gain requirements for new development.
'Priority' habitats and species	All native species and habitats are important, in terms of their contribution to biodiversity, ecosystem health and their intrinsic value. However, to aid targeted biodiversity conservation, experts have identified a list of species and habitats that are considered to be rare or are in marked decline in extent, number and/or distribution. These are Wales' species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. ³¹ Where possible the LNP's efforts will consider the potential benefits for these species and habitats when implementing nature recovery activities.

Appendix 3: Ecosystems and Habitat types of the Quantock Hills AONB (From NE updated March 2020)

Ecosystem	Habitat Type	Status
Enclosed Farmland	Arable	
	Improved grassland	
	Hedgerows	Priority Habitat
	Orchards	Priority Habitat
	Wood pasture and parklands	
Grassland	Lowland dry acid grassland	Priority Habitat
	Good quality semi-improved	
	Lowland meadows	Priority Habitat
	Purple Moorgrass and rush pasture	Priority Habitat
Heathland	Upland Heath	Priority Habitat
	Lowland Heath	Priority Habitat
Woodlands	Upland oakwood	Priority Habitat
	Broadleaf Woodland	Priority Habitat
	Broadleaf woodland (planted)	Priority Habitat
	Conifer woodland	
	Mixed woodland	Priority Habitat
Coastal	Mudflats	Priority Habitat
Urban	Urban	

Appendix 4: Quantock Hills AONB - Priority Habitat Inventory (updated March 2020)



Appendix 5: Quantock Hills AONB – Relevant datasets and tools

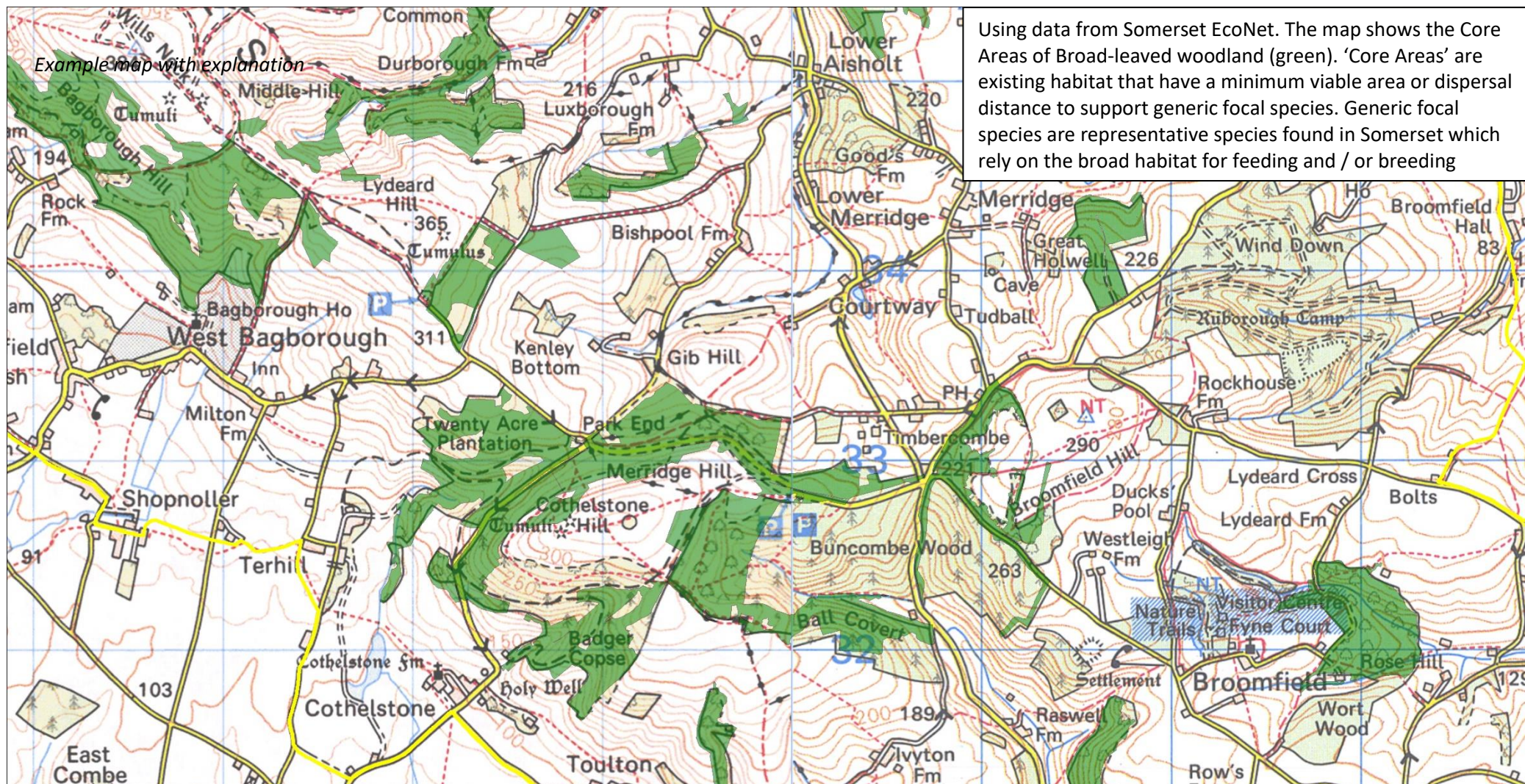
Dataset	Scale	Comments
SERC – species lists	Local	A GIS dataset from SERC of all local records reported to SERC. Does not always include national monitoring programmes.
PTSE – Dormouse Monitoring Programme	National	Local monitoring programme feeding into national Dormouse monitoring programme
Bat Monitoring Programme	AONB	The AONB Survey undertakes 6 transects throughout the AONB capturing data on species and abundance. The monitoring started in 2014 so trend data is limited.
Bird Monitoring Programme	AONB	The AONB Service is involved in a number of bird monitoring schemes in partnership with other organisations such as BTO or SoS. Some such as the Pied Flycatcher monitoring have been going for enough years to allow trend analysis. Some are more ad-hoc but still provide an overview of species and abundance.
Deer Count	AONB	The AONB Service has supported the Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group in undertaking the Quantock Deer Count. There are records going back to the early 1990 which allows assessment of trend data across geographical range.
Somerset Ecological Network	County	SCC, SWT, SERC and FC (Forest Research) derived ecological network model and mapping. Based on four broad habitat types – broad-leaved woodland, priority grassland, heathland and acid grassland and fen, marsh and swamp. Modelling run on 4m cell size which is suitable for local scale analysis.
Species Tool for AONBs	National	NE derived dataset which identifies species which fall into the most severely threatened Red List category (Critically Endangered). It has attempted to show relevance by AONB and NCA with caveats that it is likely to be inaccurate at the local level
National Habitat Network Maps for England	National	Natural England dataset. Due to scale limited use at AONB scale but useful indicator for looking at links beyond AONB boundary.
Species risks and opportunity maps	National	
Natural Capital Maps	National	Natural England dataset. Large scale (25km cell size) reduces use at local level.

Tools	Source	Comments
DEFRA – Magic	Defra	Includes habitat and species data, including targeting data for Countryside Stewardship. Majority of datasets at resolution which will allow useful analysis at local layer.
Forestry Commission Map browser - ForesterGIS	Forestry Commission	Detailed mapping include forestry inventory and targeting mapping for species associated with woodland.
Nature Networks – A summary for practitioners	Natural England	
Future Flows and Groundwater levels	UK CEH	Created at 1km resolution with scenarios for ground water levels and river flow patterns to 2050. Due to resolution limited use
Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System	Forestry Commission	A tool that allows users to input a few criteria (soil type, current rainfall) and assess suitability of tree species based on likely changes to climate to 2050 and 2080.
Integrated Habitat System (IHS)	SERC	Integration of existing classifications systems in use in the UK. Main areas of Somerset have been captured and ground truthed through existing projects. Though Quantock Hills has not been SERC has undertaken infill analysis to provide IHS data at lower resolution.

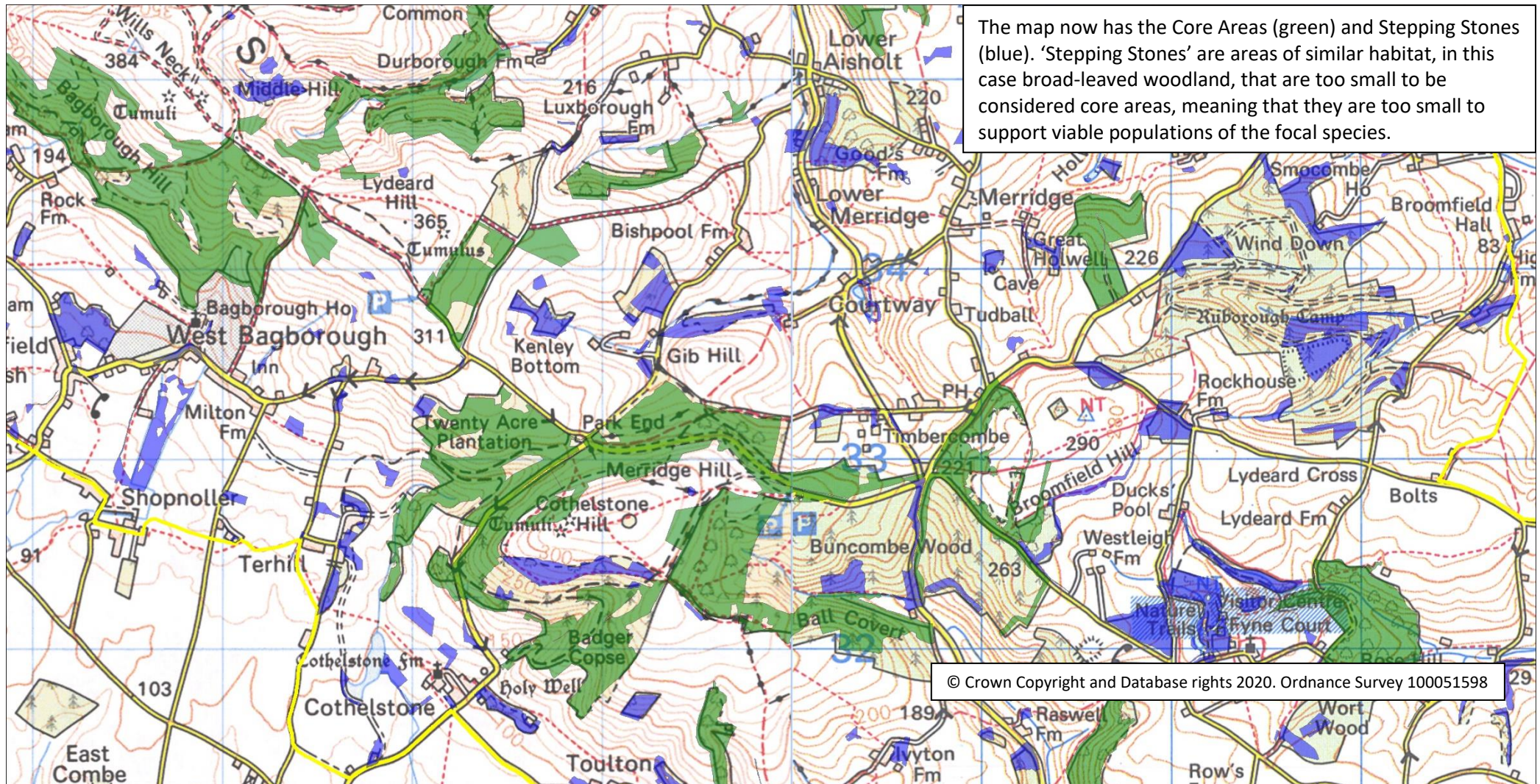
Appendix 6: Section 41 Species (species of principal importance) identified for Quantock Hills (taken from NE national dataset).

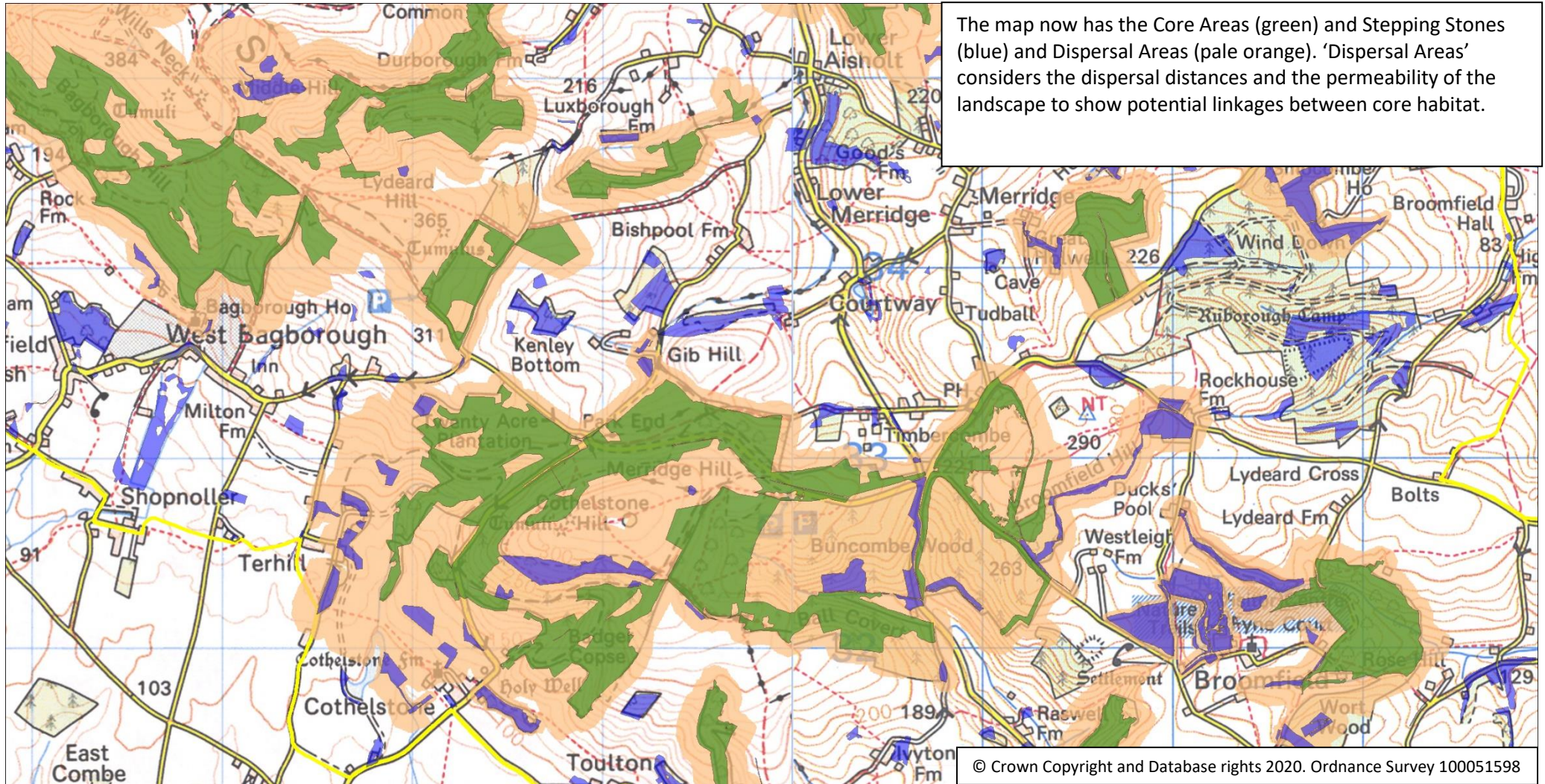
Common Name	Taxa	Comments
Skylark	Bird	Present – Summer Heathland Breeding Bird Survey.
Tree Pipit	Bird	Limited records.
Barbastelle Bat	Bat	Present – NBMP & AONB Bat Monitoring Programme
Nightjar	Bird	Present – BTO & AONB Monitoring Programme
Lesser Redpoll	Bird	Limited Records
Linnet	Bird	Present – Summer Heathland Breeding Bird Survey.
Common Cockoo	Bird	Present – Summer Heathland Breeding Bird Survey.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Bird	
Yellowhammer	Bird	Present – Summer Heathland Breeding Bird Survey.
Otter	Mammal	Present – SERC records
Hazel Dormouse	Mammal	Present – PTES monitoring programme
Spotted Flycatcher	Bird	
Noctule	Bat	Present – NBMP & AONB Bat Monitoring Programme
House Sparrow	Bird	
Wood Warbler	Bird	
Soprano Pipistrelle	Bat	Present – NBMP & AONB Bat Monitoring Programme
Brown Long-eared bat	Bat	Present – NBMP & AONB Bat Monitoring Programme
Marsh Tit	Bird	Present – SERC records
Dunnock	Bird	
Bullfinch	Bird	
Greater Horseshoe bat	Bat	Present – NBMP & AONB Bat Monitoring Programme
Lesser Horseshoe bat	Bat	Present – NBMP & AONB Bat Monitoring Programme
Starling	Bird	
Great Crested newt	Amphibian	Present – SERC records
Song thrush	Bird	Present – SERC records
Brown hairstreak	Butterfly	
Chamomile	Vascular Plant	

Appendix 7 Example of Nature Recovery Network.



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To: Quantock Hills JAC
Author: Alex Meletiou AONB Landscape Planning Officer
Date: 21st July 2020

Subject: Planning Report

Planning applications

From 1st January to 30^h June 2020 the AONB received 52 planning applications for consideration which have been followed up from the published lists or by direct invitation to comment. Although Corvid-19 restrictions dampened down applications for a short while, these now appear to be 'back to normal'.

The distribution of applications between the two LPAs are listed below, with one application received from Somerset County Council. As a Regulation 4 application, this will be determined by SCC planners as the County are to carry out the development themselves. In all other cases an application from the County would be determined by the relevant District Council.

The distribution also shows the number of applications within each parish.

Sedgemoor DC

Bridgwater	- 2
Broomfield	- 4
Goathurst	- 1
North Petherton	- 1
Nether Stowey	- 1
Over Stowey	- 5
Spaxton	- <u>1</u>
	15

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Bicknoller	- 6
Bishops Lydeard	- 3
Crowcombe	- 7
Holford	- 3
Kingston St Mary	- 4
Kilve	- 2 (One from SCC)
Taunton	- 1
West Bagborough	- 3
West Quantoxhead	- <u>8</u>
	37

The applications are made up of the following categories:

Advertising signs	- 1
Agricultural conversion to residential	- 5
Agricultural buildings	- 4 (one appeal)
Agricultural dwelling	- 3
Conversion to holiday let	- 1
Conversion of holiday let to residential	- 1
Commercial (pub/restaurant) to residential/holiday let	- 1
Domestic extension	- 12
Dwelling replacement	- 1
Holiday pods/huts/lodges	- 3
Horse arena/stables	- 2
Major development	- 5
Minor works (residential)	- 6
New residential	- 2 (one appeal)

Pond creation	- 1
Telecommunications mast	- 2 (1 mast, 2 sites)
Track/access	- 2
	52

33 of these applications attracted a 'no comment' response. The remainder were either objected to or raised some concerns.

Current issues

A telecommunications mast has been applied for under Prior Approval (PA) rights close to Merridge. This is for Emergency Services use and so cannot be objected to save as to location. The consultants appointed by EE to negotiate the site are the same as those who recently applied for a similar mast at Broomfield, which was ultimately withdrawn following a poor application (See JAC report 9th January 2020). Unfortunately, the quality of the recent application was equally poor, with little care taken in outlining other possible sites and the reasons behind their rejection. With no consultation had with the AONB Service prior to submission and a badly chosen site in which to locate the mast, the Service objected to the Prior Approval application and requested that full planning be submitted. Following the LPA's rejection of the PA application, a socially distanced meeting was held onsite, and a new and much less obtrusive location was agreed with full mitigation measures to be incorporated, a new application will now be submitted. If the consultants had followed the NPPF (section 45) and their own industry Code of Best Practice and approached the AONB prior to their original application, a lot of time and effort could have been saved.

The agricultural building at Holford (Strawberry Fields) is continuing to occupy time as following the latest refusal of planning permission, an appeal has now been lodged. Final comments were due in by 24th June so a final verdict should be forthcoming soon.

An application was submitted and given consent for The Travellers Rest at Broomfield to be converted into a new residential unit and holiday lets. The case for closing the pub and converting it into its new use was made on the back of a business case which 'proved' that the business was failing, and another use had to be found for the premises. The AONB did not specifically object as the new proposals will not radically change the appearance of the site and therefore cause no harm to the landscape. The loss of a further amenity to the area is regrettable and was commented on, however as a non-village location the impact on local communities is reduced.

Upcoming news

The NAAONB have informed us that a new scheme is in progress to expand and upgrade the SRN (Shared Rural Network) for 4G coverage. To quote from the email from the NAAONB, "The scale of this upgrading is large. The previous programme Mobile Infrastructure Project had a budget of £75m, SRN has a budget of £1bn. The industry will be matching the government's £500m with £532m of their investment. Vodafone have established their first SRN in Wales <https://newscentre.vodafone.co.uk/press-release/welsh-village-uk-first-shared-rural-network-site/>

Something to look forward to!

Alex Meletiou
Landscape Planning Officer
9th July 2020

Summary (year to date): Summary shows budget as submitted to Defra January 2020. Due to Covid-19 budgets will need to be revised to take account of reduced income and assessment of changes in expenditure. Please see Quantock Hills AONB Business Plan 2020-21 – Response to the Covid-19 situation for further details. Overall expenditure on direct work items are lower as would be expected due to restrictions on movement and land management works. Fixed cost items, such as rent and rates are still applicable. AONB Budgets are currently on track.

RECOMMENDATION – OWG Note the report.

SUMMARY - Budget	Budget	Budget (expenditure)	Income	Balance (exp – income)	
	Core	£294,917	£294,917	£0	
	Projects	£54,428	£54,428	£0	
	Landscape Ptn Scheme	£340,491	£340,491	£0	
	Projects [HPC]	£45,000	£45,000	£0	
	Amenity Land	£13,800	£16,995	£3,195	The balance is likely to be used due to significant roadside tree work needed to be undertaken at Cothelstone Hill.
	Total	£748,636	£751,831	-£3,195	
	Reserves (b/f 2019/20)	£43,155	£72,975	£29,820	
	Earmarked Reserves	£24,000		£24,000	To cover 50% of whole team redundancy as agreed in the core funding partners Statement of Intent.
	Reserves			£9,014	Surplus.

	Measure	Budget	Performance (Qu 1)	Comments	RAG
CORE / REVENUE - Actual	£ / % Budget line	£	£ / %		😊
	£/% [salaries, NI, SA]	£241,600	£55,657 / 23%	Slightly lower expenditure showing as inflationary increase, which has been budgeted, is not agreed.	😊
	£/% [training]	£1,600	£0 / 0%		😊
	£/% [rent, rates, electricity, water, premise insurance]	£11,920	£8,235 / 69%	Office and depot rent main outgoings.	😊
	£/% [stationary, post, phones, printing]	£2,150	£331 / 15%	Lower due to majority of staff working from home during Covid-19 situation.	😊
	£/% [travel, vehicle costs]	£18,898	£610 / 3%	AONB vehicles (x2) lease has been extended by 12 months to July 2021 due to being unable to run tender during Covid-19 lockdown. Invoices due Jul20.	😊
	£/% [Equipment, maintenance, clothing, uniform]	£4,600	£305 / 7%	Lower due to reduced land management work during Covid-19 situation.	😊
	£/% [Literature, publications, publicity]	£1,110	£112 / 10%		😊

	£/% [Meeting costs, hospitality]	£1,200	£0 / 0%		😊
	£/% [Management fee, insurance]	£9,040	£0 / 0%		😊
	£/% [Memberships]	£2,800	£3,156 / 113%	Slightly increased due to one-off payment to allow increased collaboration for Colchester Declaration work	😐
	£/% [Research & Development]	£0	£0 / 0%		😊
CORE / REVENUE IN	£ / % Grant – Defra	£166,239	£0 / 0%	Due September (75%) and March (25%).	😊
	£ / % Contributions – Local Authorities	£42,900	£0 / 0%	Invoice sent out June 2020	😊
	£ / % Contributions – Friends of Quantock	£1,000	£0 / 0%	Awaiting invoice for contract managed on behalf of FoQ prior to requesting contribution	😊
	£ / % Contributions – Other landowners	£1,000	£0 / 0%		😊
	£ / % Cost Recovery - Contracts	£5,000	£0 / 0%	HPC contract income likely to be at expected rate. Swaling income, from previous financial year, is greatly reduced. Currently budgeting for £1,000 reduction.	😐
	£ / % Recharge – Contributions to staff posts	£34,174	£0 / 0%	Due December (75%) and March (25%)	😊
	£ / % Recharge – SCC Pen Def & AL	£18,800	£0 / 0%	Due end of financial year	😊
	£ / % Income – AONB led events	£1,000	£0 / 0%	With Covid-19 this income is expected to be lower than anticipated.	😐
PROJECTS	Project (in-year budget / spend only)	Budget	Performance (Qu 1)	Comments	RAG
	£ / % spend to date [Nature & Wellbeing Project]	£3,943	£3,593 / 91%	Expenditure on track. Project extended to end of August 2020. This will increase project costs by £2,400 though cost to QH will be £800	😐
	£ / % spend to date [EMLS Test & Trials]	£49,485	£0 / 0%	Project affected by Covid-19 restrictions. Reduced expenditure during this time which has led to claiming being put back by a quarter.	😊
	£ / % spend to date [Access]	£1,000	£261 / 26%	On track	😊
LPS	£ / % spend to date [Landscape Partnership]	£340,491	£11,896 / 3%	Budget revised June 2020 to take account of delay in scheme activities. Please see QLPS Board report for further detail of spend and income.	😊
HPC	£ / % spend to date [HPC - GQLDF]	£20,000	£12,377 / 62%	Project claims on track	😊
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - LIS]	£25,000	£0 / 0%	Expenditure due autumn 2020.	😊

Amenity	£ / % Contractors	£12,000	£4,050 / %	This will increase significantly due to roadside ash work needed at Cothelstone Hill. Original plan was to spread work over 3 years but due to rate of infection work is required to be completed this autumn.	😐
	£ / % Materials / equipment	£1,500	£0 / 0%		😊
	£ / % Travel / fuel	£300	£0 / 0%		😊
	£ / % Income (carry forward 2019/20)	£9,275	£0 / 0%	Viament has not been actioned yet.	😊
	£ / % Income (Agri-environment schemes)	£7,720	£5,110 / 66%	Income from HLS schemes. CS payment is going to be late which may impact budget	😐

Quantock Hills AONB Service – Business Plan 2020-21 response to Covid19



Author	Iain Porter	Date	10/07/2020
Check	Chris Edwards	Status	Draft
Version History			
1.1	Updated to include potential budget impacts		
1.2	Updated June to include latest guidance on outdoor working. Included links to other guidance to ensure reader is able to get latest advice.		
1.3	Updated to include extension to end August of Nature & Wellbeing project.		

1. Introduction.

- a. The Covid 19 pandemic is changing every aspect of UK life from work, social and leisure. The Quantock Hills AONB Service has switched from Business as Usual to Business Continuity and this paper explore the impact on the Business Plan and looks to prioritise the units work going forward.
- b. Due to the fast-evolving nature of the pandemic and the response of national and local government and other agencies the document should be used to inform initial discussions and be updated on a regular basis.
- c. The units resource may reduce as some members of the team are redeployed to support the Covid 19 response. All funding partners have acknowledged the impact this will have on outputs by the team.
- d. The table below does not look to set priorities or work stream beyond the Covid 19 response however it is likely that certain work areas will be a higher priority as set by the partnership, local government and Defra. The AONB Service should maintain a flexible approach to be able to meet the priorities which will require more regular business planning. These may include
 - i. Local economy
 - ii. Health & wellbeing
 - iii. Access & recreation, in support of wellbeing

2. Budget Impact

- a. Defra and local authority partners have confirmed core funding contributions for 2020/21. There is no indication that these will change, though the work streams required from the funding partners may be amended in light of changing priorities.

- b. The requirement for social distancing, along with the wet weather during Dec – Feb did reduce the amount of swaling undertaken to almost zero. This contract income was anticipated to be around £2,500 - £3,000.
- c. At present it is envisaged that the Covid19 situation will reduce other contract income through the HPC schemes to a small extent. However this will be reassessed on a monthly basis as the contract income from these is in the region of £10,000 which if reduced would increase pressure on the AONB core budget
- d. The Landscape Partnership Scheme started on 1st April. There is an impact on the work programme however it is thought that as long as the current restrictions are lifted by August the financial impacts on the AONB Service will be nil. As this is in effect a ring-fenced budget as long as activity can be increased in years 4 and 5 the budget should remain largely on target.
- e. The Nature & Wellbeing Project has been extended further 2 months. During the period of lockdown and continuing during the easing of restrictions the AONB Service has acknowledged the impact of the restrictions and isolation on existing volunteers and groups who suffer with poor mental health. By extending the project it has allowed continued contact by the project officer and the development of plans for activity as restrictions are lifted. Anticipated increase is £2,500 but this will be met by all project partners so cost to AONB only £850.
- f. The current restrictions may impact on the AONB Service's ability to undertake the required land management to fulfil its obligations under the HLS and CS schemes associated with Cothelstone Hill. These schemes are held in a ring-fenced budget so there will be no impact to the AONB's core budget but it will mean that works will need to be postponed for a further year until the next HLS / CS claim period.

3. Future impacts

- a. The movement and activity restrictions which have been in place since 20th March are being lifted, in stages, though there are still a number of requirements and additional requirements which will impact on the work of the AONB Service. Particular issues that the AONB Service needs to be aware of is the requirement for social distancing and working with people / groups who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable. The AONB Service is undertaking a number of activities though each one is assessed against the up to date Covid-19 Risk Assessment, which itself is being regularly reviewed.
- b. Local lockdowns / future local outbreaks. The Government outlined its strategy for dealing with future outbreaks. This included increased testing in specific geographical areas and the potential for 'local lockdowns'. At present the government has not been clear in what way it would expect local lockdowns to be taken forward but it is thought to include closure of specific premises or locations, such as parks and open spaces, to try and reduce the infection rate rather than a complete lockdown of a large geographical area. If this was to occur it would have a reduced impact on the AONB Services ability to operate, though so activities, involving groups, especially if they are classed as clinically vulnerable, make be adapted or stopped. Somerset county Council currently has a draft Local Outbreak Management Plan which is due to be adopted soon.

LINKS

Government Guidance – [Covid-19 Construction and other outdoor working](#)

Government Guidance – [Covid-19 Heritage Locations](#)

Government Guidance - [Shielding and protecting clinically vulnerable people](#)

AONB Staff Key

AONB Manager	AM	Development Officer	DO
Landscape Planning Officer	LPO	Ranger	R
Partnership Ranger	PR	Volunteer Coordinator	VC
Support Officer	SO	Nature & Wellbeing Project Officer	NW

Table 3 Quantock Hills AONB Service 2020/21 Unit Work Plan

Action	Milestone / Target	AONB Lead / support	
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & QUALITY			
Request evidence from LPA's how they have demonstrated due regard.	Information included in JAC reports	AM / LPO	
Deliver ELMS Test & Trial Project	Test and trial complete by 31/03/2021	AM / DO / LPO	CONTINUE - 100% Defra funding. Defra currently see this continuing and delivering to original timeline. NAAONB have put in a variance so individual project milestone can be flexible. Majority of resource is contracted out reducing impact on core AONB team.
Assess requirement to renew arrange for pre-application advice to local planning authorities.	Decision reached 31/10/2020	AM / LPO	POSTPONE – not priority area of work
Contact relevant landowners and develop a scheme of work as basis of LEI bid	Bid submitted	DO	CONTINUE - Can still work up scheme of works based on local knowledge and use of remote data. Will be able to introduce idea to relevant landowners but unlikely to be able to work up full bid until access is allowed.
Input into events under Quantock Facilitation Fund.	8 events undertaken	DO	POSTPONE - Facilitation fund not undertaking events during CV. NE have not responded on impact yet but it is likely that overall number of events required will be reduced inline with time lost.

Complete fixed-point photography for 2020	Take photographs from 12 sites during 2020	R / DO	POSTPONE - Can occur later in year if restrictions allow. Some FPP undertaken in 2019 and early 2020 so few sites left for completion.
Promote events by other organisations where they promote the special qualities of the Quantock Hills	All relevant events, where notified, promoted via AONB website and SM feeds	SO	POSTPONE – Look to pick up when movement restrictions are eased. Would be valuable to proactively approach organisations when movement restrictions end to encourage and promote their events. Will need to evaluate ability to deliver events in line with latest distancing guidance.
LAND MANAGEMENT: FARMING, FORESTRY & CATCHMENT			
NELMS T&T Project: Recommend options which are beneficial to priority habitats of Quantock Hills AONB	Final report highlights options which will be beneficial to priority habitats	AM / FWAG-SW	CONTINUE – see above.
NELMS T&T Project: Ensure inclusion of beech hedgebank option through NELMS	Recommendation in final report	AM / FWAG-SW	CONTINUE – see above
NELMS T&T Project: As part of the spatial framework development include connectivity mapping	Datasets / GIS layers created and available with final report	AM / FWAG-SW	CONTINUE – see above
NELMS T&T Project: As part of the spatial framework development include connectivity mapping	Datasets / GIS layers created and available with final report	AM / FWAG-SW	CONTINUE – see above
Support FoQ to fence Ramscombe mire.	Ramscombe mire fenced	DO	CONTINUE - Contract due to be let in next couple of weeks. Works have been completed.
Support QCA in delivery of HLS on Quantock Common SSSI, source funding for scrub removal	Swaling & scrub management undertaken to NE prescription	DO	CONTINUE - May have impact if contractors unable to access site but this is thought unlikely unless there is a local lockdown.
Apply for funding through SRA and FWAG-SW NFM projects	Funding secured and project delivered	DO / R	CONTINUE - Will be looking to apply in November / December so no need to amend yet.
Engage with tree planting initiatives supporting community planting schemes utilising funding sources such as the 2SP and SRA.	2 tree regeneration / planting schemes supported	DO	POSTPONE - Tree planting season has now passed but site visits and community engagement work will be taken forward in early autumn in line with latest distancing guidance.
Ensure woodland management events undertaken as part of the QFF event programme	3 events run under QFF cover woodland management topics	DO / FWAG-SW	POSTPONE – See above
Promote opportunities for woodland creation through CS and ensure inclusion in QFF events	2 woodland creation schemes approved	DO / R	CONTINUE – CS applications still open so in theory CS Woodland Creation applications can still be made.

Screen woodland management plans ensuring opportunities for broadleaf conversion or creation of open ground is realised.	All consulted WMP screened and relevant comments submitted	DO / LPO	CONTINUE – WMP process still open so in theory WMP applications can come forward. All assessments will need to take account of any distancing requirements when undertaking site visits.
Undertake swaling programme as agreed by QCMG and approved by NE	Agreed swaling programme competed.	R / PR / DO	POSTPONE - Current season is cancelled. Dependant on access restrictions should be able to complete next season. FUNDING IMPLACATIONS - Will reduce core income for 2020/21.
Support delivery of hedge laying training and competition	2 training days and 1 hedgelaying competition delivered.	R / FWAG-SW	CONTINUE – due autumn / winter. Assess nearer the time.
Undertake land management activities on SWHT and FoQ land holdings	Regular audits completed. Work programme for CS and HLS completed	DO / R / PR	CONTINUE – prioritise activity to essential tasks (e.g. pony checks). Some items of work delayed due to access restrictions but summer work programme going ahead with distancing requirements in place for staff, volunteers and contractors.
Support Building Resilience Project in delivery of workshops / training opportunities for volunteers	4 volunteers engaged in workshops / training events	VC / vols	POSTPONE – contact Plantlife to assess impact on overall project delivery and whether this element will continue beyond movement restrictions.
BIODIVERSITY: WILDLIFE & HABITATS			
LIS: Undertake ground preparation at Ramscombe to create open areas.	12Ha managed as open areas with aim of creation of extensive species rich grassland and native scrub.	DO / FE	POSTPONE – contracts with suppliers and works due autumn 2020. Contract timescale mean works can be postponed into 2021 if required. No issues.
Lead on Quantock Bat Monitoring programme ensuring 6 transects are completed	6 transect recording completed	DO / VC / vols	Plan to undertake bat surveys but with amended methodology to be able to undertake if social distancing measures are still in place and movement restrictions allow. Continue to review inline with BCT guidance.
Lead on Dormouse monitoring for Cothelstone Hill	Dormouse monitoring carried out as part of PTES national monitoring programme.	R / vols	Monitoring by licensed volunteers only. Due to distancing requirements it is not possible for licenced volunteers to supervise other volunteers / staff. While whole season monitoring has not been possible under restrictions partial season monitoring will still be useful. Continue to review inline with PTES guidance
Lead on the annual Quantock deer count	Annual deer count completed and figures available to the public.	R / PR / vols	CONTINUE - Due March 2021. Continue to plan for going ahead. Assess nearer the time.
Lead on Nightjar monitoring for Quantock Common	10 1km grid squares surveyed (evening & morning surveys)	PR / R / vols	Survey but with adapted methodology to be able to undertake is social distancing measures. Likely that full survey will not be possible but will still gather useful data. Continue to review inline with BTO guidance
Lead on Butterfly monitoring for Cothelstone Hill & Fyne Court	2 transected surveyed during period April – Sept.	VC / Vols BCS	Adapted methodology allowing surveying within social distancing requirements. Full season survey will not be

			possible but partial data still valuable. Continue to review inline with BC guidance.
Support monitoring of pied flycatchers on Quantock Hills and feed into regional project on effects of climate change on indicator species	Monitoring of 150 boxes in key location throughout AONB	PR / R / BTO	Survey but with adapted methodology to be able to undertake is social distancing measures. Likely that full survey will not be possible but will still gather useful data. Continue to review inline with BTO guidance
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL INFLUENCES			
Investigate potential to support the Somerset Highways Parish Signs project by approach to SCC highways	Support, if appropriate, provided to parish volunteers	VC	POSTPONE – not high priority.
Support the Heritage Monitoring Volunteer Group enabling them to undertake SM monitoring	All SM's surveyed in summer and winter months	VC	With recent relaxation of social distancing guidance limited and adapted surveying of SM's taking place. Should be able to complete summer survey if enough volunteers wish to take part.
Publish and promote results of SM monitoring	Pdf summary of survey available December 2020 and posted on website.	VC	CONTINUE – collate responses and produce simple report to send to volunteers, staff and other interested organisations.
GEOLOGY & CLIMATE			
Develop project plan to undertake climate change adaptation (based on NE546).	Project plan developed with delivery timetabled for 2021 – 23.	AM	AMEND – This action point will now be built into the Nature Recovery Plan development due to occur during 2020 – 21.
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE			
Ensure resources available to respond to LPA forward planning strategies	All relevant forward planning strategies commented on	AM	CONTINUE
Screen all relevant forward planning strategies and submit comments to ensure AONB special character is conserved and enhanced	All relevant forward planning strategies comments on.	LPO / AM	CONTINUE-
Screen and comment on relevant development applications	All relevant planning applications comments on	LPO	CONTINUE
Run annual workshop for LPS planning staff in partnership with other Somerset AONBs	Annual workshop undertaken	LPO / AM	CONTINUE – Due autumn / winter but assess priority of event to continue again in summer.

LOCAL ECONOMY & VISITORS			
Use Quantock Facilitation Fund to undertake event on diversification opportunities through NELMS	Access agreement in place with main user groups	AM / DO	POSTPONE – see above
ACCESS, RECREATION & WELLBEING			
Engage in Wilstock Hub to investigate potential non-car routes to Quantock Hills	Project and funding secured	DO	POSTPONE – not priority.
Undertake access audit of 1 Quantock location (Cothelstone Hill) and produce an access plan	Access plan produced and finding published on website.	R / SWHT	CONTINUE - Look to take forward desk based to produce draft which can be checked once movement restrictions are lifted.
Undertake audit of AONB promoted routes	Annual access audit of AONB promoted routes completed. Action plan produced and works undertaken	PR / R	POSTPONE – audits up to date prior to movement restrictions. This can be prioritised once movement restrictions are lifted.
Provide secretariat and be AONB lead on Police & Conservation Agencies Working Group	2 PCAWG meetings held	R / SO	POSTPONE – may be worth communication with group members to keep them up to date with AONB approach to CV19.
Support new Somerset Natural Connections (SNC) projects linking projects with core AONB work	Regular liaison with SNC project staff	VC / SNC	Delayed start due to recruitment and inability to undertake project start-up activities. Currently looking to recruit in July, interview in August with potential start date for project manager in September. Rest of team due to be recruited in September / October with activities due to start on the group in November.
Ensure all volunteer role descriptions provide accessibility requirements. Investigate potential new roles that allow for participation by those with restricted mobility	All role descriptions reviewed and updated as necessary	VC	CONTINUE – Also opportunity to look at all volunteer paperwork to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose.
Work with SNC project to develop further volunteering opportunities that enhance wellbeing of participants.	One volunteer group set up from 'missing group' population.	VC / SNC	POSTPONE – as above.
Ensure information from staff / organisations which will increase accessibility of AONB to individuals and groups, especially those considered to be missing groups, is promoted via website, e-newsletter and SM feeds	Assessment of existing information undertaken and reported back to AM by Dec20	SO	CONTINUE – desk-based assessment can be taken forward ready for when movement restrictions are eased.

Provide data and liaise with relevant organisations / groups, especially 'missing groups' in support of SNC project development	SNC Project bids submitted.	NW / AM / DO	CONTINUE – SNC Project applications all submitted. Look to develop project start up bearing in mind movement restrictions and the impact on project delivery.
Ensure Somerset Wellbeing map, hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust, is populated and live	Wellbeing map live Jul20	NW	CONTINUE – desk-based work but dependant upon Somerset Wildlife Trust. Assess their ability to deliver and adjust output accordingly.
Ensure Quantock Hills AONB information is on Somerset Wellbeing Map	All relevant Quantock Hills AONB information on map at launch	NW	CONTINUE – desk-based work. Continue so when map does go live it is well populated.
Ensure that current organisations / groups engaged in the Nature & Wellbeing Project are able to access wellbeing benefits of the AONB once project ends	All groups / organisations who wish to access Quantock Hills for wellbeing activities given resources to be able to do so.	NW	Work has continued and is due to start again once easing of movement restrictions, due beginning of July, Continued communication with individuals and groups with key messages.
Provide specific input into information requirements of Quantock Hills AONB website to maximise accessibility for groups and organisations for wellbeing activities	Input into Communication Plan, building in key messages and presentation of access information	NW / SO	CONTINUE – desk-based assessment.
COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEERING			
Secure external funding for provision of discretionary grants pot available to parish councils and community groups	Discretionary Grant fund secured	DO	CONTINUE - While not much can be undertaken at present ensure staff resource is available when access restrictions are lifted to realise opportunities for funding and grant aiding which support Quantock Communities. Continue to assess Green Recovery Fund development.
Support parish / community groups to secure funding for projects which support Management Plan implementation	Within resources parish / community group projects supported.	DO	As above.
Undertake screening of relevant Community and Neighbourhood Plans and respond as required	All relevant Community and Neighbourhood Plans screened.	AM / LPO	CONTINUE
VOLUNTEERS – engage with tasks for QCV (joint group)	Leading 6 QCV tasks based on AONB tasks	R / VC	Group tasks currently not going ahead. Potential impact on work streams. Ensure NT or AONB communicate with QCV volunteers
Support Quantock Commons Management Group by attending meetings when appropriate	Attendance at 2 QCMG meetings / site visits	R / PR	POSTPONE

Attend Coleridge Way Steering Group meeting representing QHAONB	Attendance at all Coleridge Way Steering Group meetings	R	POSTPONE
Support Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group	Provide advice and support to QDMCG	SO / R / PR	POSTPONE – information on deer count can be sent out if QDMCG request it to. Meetings to be postponed
Support volunteer rangers to deliver public walks and events promoting the special qualities of the AONB.	Volunteer Rangers lead 4 walks and attend 3 shows / events	VC / vols	POSTPONE – See response to public events action.
Support existing AONB led volunteer groups to ensure training, support, equipment and materials are provided	VR, WMV, H MV, ET, CEV groups all supported with same level of outputs.	VC	CONTINUE – during movement restrictions support will consist of (a) communications (b) ordering uniform (c) plan training requirements once movement restrictions are lifted.
Undertake informal assessment of volunteering requirements to allow AONB unit to resource volunteering	Assessment report completed November 20	VC / DO	POSTPONE – look to start once movement restrictions are lifted and once we know priority work streams assessment can be undertaken.
Through SNC project look to develop new volunteering opportunities and develop journey pathway from SNC to AONB volunteers	Legacy plan developed when new volunteer groups are set up.	NW / VC	CONTINUE – assessment, development and planning can occur during current restrictions, ready for project launch.
Deliver events to relevant groups / organisations within resources to promote wellbeing activities within Quantock AONB	2 events undertaken with 30 participants	NW / Vols	POSTPONE – activities, tasks unable to take place. Ensure regular communications with groups and ensure plans are in place to start activities when movement restrictions ease. Will review when distancing guidance changes at the beginning of July.
PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING & INTERPRETATION			
Lead 10 public events as part of the Quantock Events programme	10 events run with 150 participants in total.	SO / R / PR / Vols	POSTPONE – Response once CV19 impact reduces likely to be running of events but reduce outputs accordingly. Look to put 'draft' events in leaders calendars so a programme is ready to go once movement restrictions are lifted.
Support Plantlife's Building Resilience Project through project promotion and staff resources for training and delivery	Support for 2 forest bathing sessions or public events	NW / PR	POSTPONE – ensure Plantlife aware. Can look to reschedule if resources allow. Look to see if can produce a self-led Forest Bathing guide for launch once movement restrictions are lifted.
Coordinate event notification (groups >20 per) for the Quantock Hills	All notified events assessed and appropriate advice given. Promotion of event notification process sent to relevant organisations	PR / SO	CONTINUE – desk based so no impact. Due to movement restrictions expectation is that event notification will reduce significantly, though a few may come in with a long lead in time e.g. people planning events for 2021.

Run annual photographic competition on agreed theme	Photographic competition run	SO	POSTPONE – possibility to do a different themed competition but needs to be carefully thought out so as not to negatively impact on people's wellbeing.
CORE DUTIES / PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT			
OWG and JAC reports produced. These reports will provide monitoring against the action plan targets	4 OWG reports and 4 JAC reports produced.	AM / DO / R / LPO	CONTINUE - Reports can be produced and sent to JAC members. Look to post on website for wider public.
Develop new business opportunities through joint working with relevant groups / organisations. Include development of non-exchequer income generation.	Partnership approval for adoption of income streams.	DO / AM	POSTPONE – funding priorities likely to change after CV19 and national and local government response will direct work streams. Ensure F&I T&F group is ready to start once initial response from government is received.
Write /DEFRA AONB bid with input from OWG and JAC partnership.	DEFRA bid accepted	DO / AM	CONTINUE – work due autumn / winter.
Host 4 OWG and JAC meetings – April, July, November and February 2014 to allow informed and engaged ownership of partnership by JAC.	4 OWG meetings held. 4 JAC meeting held	AM / SA / DO / R / PR / LP	CONTINUE – move to virtual meetings. Ensure all partnership members confident to be able to access virtual meeting. Consider training or familiarisation sessions prior to JAC meeting.
Regular meetings of AONB Service team to review AONB Management activities and issues	12 meetings held.	All team 3 days each	CONTINUE - Meetings switching to weekly virtual meetings.
Membership and involvement in the NAAONB to ensure national and regional liaison and to ensure that the NAAONB represents the views of the Quantock Hills partnership	Attendance at Lead Officers meetings and other meetings where applicable	AM / DO / LPO	CONTINUE - Many NAAONB event due to occur during summer cancelled. AONB continue to engage and input into NAAONB work such as funding and income working group and lead officers discussions.
Annual risk assessment reviews, instigate new H&S procedures in line with good practice.		DO / AM	CONTINUE - Completed February 2020. Review due in January 2021 so should not be impacted by CV19. New Covid19 risk assessments (premise & outdoor working) approved by SCC. Review regularly.
Undertake finance monitoring and provide reports in various formats to partners, hosts and grant giving organisations		AM / DO	CONTINUE - No impact
1-1 management meetings, annual PRaD meetings staff management		AM / DO	CONTINUE - No impact, use virtual meetings (Skype, Teams).
Develop annual communication plan detailing key messages and delivery mechanisms.	Communication plan signed off by AM Jun20	SO / AM	CONTINUE – take into account requirement for flexible approach to comms messages during present situation but Comm's plan going forward would allow greater buy in from tea.
Ensure use of SM through liaison and direction of AONB staff	All SM required through communication plan actioned	SO	CONTINUE – ensure key messages agreed with AM during current situation.

Table 4. Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme. Annual Work Programme.

Activity Note; black = little/no impact Amber = some impact Red = significant impact,	Original year 1 plan	Likely to be significantly impacted by virus?	Revised year 1 plan, assuming situation is more normalised by autumn
Recruit staff (4 posts, 3.2 fte)	Recruit in April, in post June	yes	Recruit later in summer (Aug/Sept), once virus peak has passed, aiming to be staffed up by autumn. Use saved budget (salaries and support costs) to extend contracts or hours later in LPS
Open office	Open April 2020	yes	Open office in autumn ready for new staff team, saving office costs for now
Commission website	Spring 2020 to be live by summer	no	Spring 2020 to be live by summer, but include provision for modification / additions once other staff in post
Produce display materials (pull ups etc) and leaflet	Spring 2020	no	Summer 2020 (not now needed before Autumn anyway)
Commission evaluation consultant	Spring 2020	no	Spring 2020 – would have been helpful to have full team in post but not essential
1.1 View to a Hill	nothing till winter year 2	no	n/a
1.2 Digital Landscapes	nothing significant until yr 2	no	n/a
1.3 Romantic Poets	Commission education facilitator spring 2020 with activities starting autumn term	Yes	Commission education facilitator spring 2020 with activities starting autumn term, but with initial planning meetings for teachers held electronically. 12 workshops planned for yr 1 starting in Autumn term.
1.4 Quantock Connections (inclusive events)	Major events programme for disadvantaged communities starting summer 2020	Yes, very significant, but can add extra events in yr 5 to compensate if necessary	Assuming staff in post in Autumn, should get a growing body of activities going over winter and have a full programme summer 2021. Opportunities for creative alternatives if still under virus restrictions over winter.
1.5 Young Rangers	Commission provider autumn 2020	no, assuming we can start delivery Jan 2021 as planned	Commission partner summer 2020, just to manage workload better in expectation of a busy autumn
1.6 Apprentices	nothing till yr 3	no	n/a
1.7 Events	Major events programme for starting summer 2020	Yes, very significant, but can add extra events in yr 5 to compensate if necessary	Assuming staff in post in Autumn, should get a growing body of activities going over winter and have a full programme summer 2021. Opportunities for creative alternatives if still under virus restrictions over winter.

1.8 Quantock Futures	Commission provider autumn 2020, with workshops starting early 2021	no	Commission provider autumn 2020, with workshops starting early 2021. Was some thought about bringing this project forward but virus has rendered this discussion moot. May commission provider earlier than planned to manage workload.
2.1 Follies and Features	Hayman's pond restoration, Dowsborough Hill Fort drainage works and open day summer 2020 work on 3 other SAMs and heritage roadsigns autumn/winter Crowcombe gate Car Park relocation autumn 2020	yes – postpone Dowsborough work, possible others affected too.	Work to other SAMs and roadsigns should be do-able on schedule. Commission contractors for car park project with provision for delay if still under restrictions in early autumn (there's a narrow seasonal time window when work will be possible) .
2.2 hedges	Nothing due till Autumn, when a large programme of survey and practical works is due to start.	yes – delay in recruitment will mean delay in starting project even in best case scenario. Can extend in yr 5 if necessary to compensate.	For now proceed as planned but assume we will achieve less than originally proposed for this year. Grant aided work on private land should be unaffected
2.3 meadows	2ha restoration at Fyne Court	no	2ha restoration at Fyne Court, assuming NT still has capacity
2.4 wild verges	13 sites surveyed, 13 managed	yes	Survey can proceed but management will have to wait until restrictions on group events lifted.
2.5 Dormice	Work at Cothelstone autumn/winter	yes – delay in recruitment will mean delay in starting project even in best case scenario.	For now proceed as planned but assume we will achieve less than originally proposed for this year.
2.6 orchards	1 orchard recreation project	??	Can proceed if staff and vols in place by autumn planting season
2.7 Community Woodlands	Work at Broomfield, Stowey, & Cothelstone autumn/winter	yes – delay in recruitment will mean delay in starting project even in best case scenario.	For now proceed as planned but assume we will achieve less than originally proposed for this year.
2.8 Monitoring volunteers	Train vols and start programmes for a range of natural and historic heritage monitoring programmes.	yes	Buildings and trees should still be able to start, but much later than planned, butterflies and reptiles will be delayed by 1 year.
2.9 Bats	Walks and talks, building to more extensive survey in yr 2	yes	No activity until 2021, but low impact on overall 5 year programme.
2.10 Quantock Walking	Walking Festival, path repairs, parish paths	yes	Questionable if walking festival will go ahead at all. Other activities should be able to proceed as planned in Autumn/winter

3.1 Trees in the Landscape	Detailed analysis of historic records from Autumn 2020	yes	Will be a delay in starting, but provided virus restrictions lifted by Autumn should be underway by Xmas
3.2 Quantock memories	Training and interviews Jan – March 2021	no	Training and interviews Jan – March 2021
3.3 Stories of the Hills	Commission provider winter 2020/21, most activities in yr 2	no	Commission provider winter 2020/21
3.4 Archives	Project starts winter 2020/21	no	Assuming things are normal by Jan 2021 should be unaffected
3.5 Archaeology	Commission and deliver LiDAR survey. Cothelstone excavation, geophys, test pits, fieldwalking projects 5 total	yes	LiDAR can proceed as planned. Excavation, geophys, test pits, fieldwalking – too early to say but some/most will probably need to be rescheduled, so programme will now run yr 2 to yr 5