

Fyne Court
Broomfield
Bridgwater
TA5 2EQ

Quantock Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 27th November 2018

at

2.15pm

in the

Popham Hall, West Bagborough, TA4 3EQ

To: The Members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officers, Katy Coate and Amanda Sampson: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk and 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.	Apologies for absence
2.	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.
3.	Accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 31st July 2018 (copy appended) and to consider any matters arising.
4.	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.
5.	Paper A – Team and Partnership Report – Chris Edwards
6.	Paper B – Management Plan Review – Chris Edwards
7.	Paper C – Rangers Report – Andy Stevenson and Owen Jones
8.	Paper D – Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget Report 2018/19 – Iain Porter
9.	Paper E – Glover Review – Chris Edwards
10.	<p>Any other business of urgency – Final dates and locations for next year's meetings JAC – 5th February 2019 Spaxton Village Hall 4th June 2019 Bicknoller Village Hall 13th August 2019 Enmore Village Hall</p> <p>Officer Working Group Meeting dates – 22nd January 2019, 21st May 2019 and 30th July 2019</p>
	<p>Note : Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service, The Quantock Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ. Tel No 01823 451884 or e-mail : quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</p>

THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Inspection of Papers

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

2. Notes of the Meeting

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

3. Public Question Time

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

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

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

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish. If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

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

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

4. Substitutions

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

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held at West Bagborough Village Hall on Tuesday 31st July 2018.

Present

West Somerset Council	Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew (Chairman) Cllr Stuart Dowding
Somerset County Council	Cllr Hugh Davies
Taunton Deane Borough Council	Cllr Gwilym Wren
Forestry Commission	Mr Nick Salter
Friends of Quantock	Mr Philip Comer
CLA	Mr Hugh Warmington
Parish Representatives	Mr Stuart Parkman

Also Present Terry Ayres (Holford PC), David Stripp (Kingston St Mary Community Partnership), Josh Schwiso (Spaxton PC), Tim Burton (Officer WSC/TDBC), Jane Warmington (Cllr TDBC), Jo Pearson (Cheddon PC Clerk), Alan Hall (Cllr West Monkton PC), Barry Whitehead (Kilve PC), Chris Edwards (AONB Manager), Iain Porter (AONB Development Officer), Katy Coate (AONB Communication and Support Officer)

- 1. Apologies** Julie Cooper (SDC Officer), Alan Hughes (Friends of Quantock), Steve Dury (SCC Officer), Jo Chesworth (Natural England), Donna Gowler (Natural England), Matt Heard (Natural England), Mandy Chilcott (SCC), Mike Caswell (SDC Vice Chair), Alan Bradford (SDC).

Nomination for Chairman led by Chris Edwards – For the position of JAC Chairman Stuart Dowding proposed Anthony Trollope-Bellew and this was seconded by Hugh Warmington. All were in favour.

The new Chairman led the nomination for Vice Chair –Mike Caswell (absent having had to attend an internal drainage board meeting) was proposed by the Chairman, Nick Salter seconded this and all present were in favour. Mike had indicated to the Chairman that he was happy to continue in his role although not present at the meeting.

No other nominations were received for either position.

Emma-Jane Preece was present at the JAC to say farewell to the committee - Anthony thanked her for all her invaluable landscape planning advice over the past 10 years and wished her good luck in her new role with a local Landscape Architecture Consultancy

2. Declarations of Interest

Anthony Trollope-Bellew declared being a member of Friends of Quantock, Quantock Eco, Crowcombe Parish Council and a Quantock Landowner. Specifically in relation to

Paper C Appendix, paragraph 8 the current and newly proposed car parking areas at Crowcombe Park gate are owned by the chairman.
Hugh Davies declared to being on the Somerset Wildlife Trust Board.

3. Minutes of the last meeting – with the addition of Julian Taylor and Gwil Wren's apologies the minutes were signed off as a true representation of the meeting

Matters Arising – None

4. Public Question Time –

David Stripp from Kingston St Mary Community Partnership – the partnership has submitted to highways a small improvement scheme which includes a cycle path into Taunton. This is under transport consultation at the moment, until Friday. CE said the AONB were not aware but would respond in a positive way if JAC allowed as any cycle access to the hills would be favourable. JAC happy with this and David will send the link. Emma-Jane said she assumed lighting is not in scheme? David replied that no it's not. Tim Burton added that the scheme had the approval of Taunton Deane. David asked if he could we talk to AONB about improving input – CE yes.

Cllr Alan Hall (West Monkton PC) – new country park at West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine, will be planning to link in with AONB with cycle paths and bridleways onto the hills.

5. National Park and AONB review

5.1 The Chairman explained that he is not expecting decisions, but a discussion as to whether a special meeting required. In essence there are 3 alternatives (pg7) which may come out of the review – no change, an extension of the AONB boundary or inclusion with National Parks.

5.2 The Chairman pointed out that inclusion with National Park has advantage of own planning and funding direct from central government. This may remove the need to have to find other sources of funding. Main disadvantage would be becoming a side line of the National Park. See papers for other areas of concern.

5.3 CE emphasised those aren't 3 options set by the Glover commission, they are areas or issues which may well come forward.

5.4 Hugh Davies felt is a great asset to be in control of own planning and central government would be aware of this.

5.5 Gwil Wren pointed out the wide range of aims for the review and asked how the National Parks are financed as there are few organisations to receive increases to their funding from central government. He also asked if there will be the opportunity to meet the commission – CE sure there will be a chance to input however only a 1 year timeframe. He is sure a response from the partnership will be requested, possibly interviews with the Chairman and lead officers.

5.6 Gwil felt this was a very short timeframe. Is it worth sounding out Exmoor now and opening discussion? The Chairman confirmed he had only discussed briefly with Exmoor members of WSC but not the NP itself. Gwil added that it would cover a vast area, right into Devon and there was a definite danger of dilution in effort. He felt it may be that this dilution hit the AONB rather than the current NP.

5.7 Hugh Warmington felt this may be driven by ministers wanting to put a stamp on things and potentially save money. Quantock Hills AONB works so well because it's small and defined and the staff know the Quantocks well. The thought of becoming part of the NP fills him with horror.

5.8 Julian Taylor added that the funding stream would come direct from Local government and would aid economic development and with regard to planning, National Parks present an alternative view and additional protection through valid planning alternatives.

5.9 Stuart Dowding said we'd need to have conversation with NP as funding may look good at the moment but not sure it will continue.

5.10 Gwil added that the process to extend a National Park is very long. It would be unlikely anything would happen within 10 years as there is potentially a lot to consider. There will be plenty of time to discuss and decide our view/take on this.

5.11 The Chairman also added that there is a feeling in the gap between the AONB and the NP that they are ignored. Maybe there are pressures put on this gap because either side is protected. It may be a good time to talk to parishes.

5.12 Chris Edwards explained that the option of extending the boundary of the AONB would need an acre by acre increase in funding. Gwilym added that area around the AONB boundary currently has some protection in planning terms as the 'setting of an AONB', he agreed that with no increase in funding a boundary extension would not be a good idea.

5.13 Nick Salter felt it worth talking to Exmoor now to ensure any possible conversation was about a merger not a dilution. CE said he had no doubt that any move would be a takeover; Quantock Hills would not continue to exist as its own protected area.

5.14 Philip Comer said that FofQ don't see any advantage, there next meeting is in September and they will discuss then.

5.15 **ACTION – Chairman to set meeting with Exmoor National Park Authority to discuss** and he will report back.

5.16 Julian Taylor asked do they need to consult all organisations they represent. Chairman replied that there was no need to widen the discussion too far at this point.

5.17 Philip Comer asked if any direction was indicated by Glover? The Chairman explained that this was in response to their review and CE added that they will be looking at boundaries.

5.18 Chris Edwards commented that he felt this review was being carried out in a positive way to make NPs and AONBs more successful and protected. He is also expecting a more robust funding model to come back.

6. Quantock Hills Team and Partnership Update

6.1 Landscape Planner recruitment is in process but response has not been very high. Tim Burton added that there is a shortage nationally and CE also felt that the part time hours making it harder to fill.

6.2 Kristen Lambert (Nature and Wellbeing Officer) will be back early November from maternity leave.

6.3 There have been some unplanned fires at Staple Plain (arson), Woodlands Hill, and on the Crowcombe to Stowey road. Within the Swaling plan is the introduction of fire breaks on the hills to try and reduced potential spread

6.4 With regard to Land management schemes CE felt more chance of success being part of a NAAONB offer to Defra than pursuing our own. Any scheme would require funding to accomplish.

6.5 Somerset Wildlife Trust have submitted a BIG Bid to Lottery to continue the Nature and Wellbeing project, this would have the Quantock, Mendip and Blackdown Hills and Taunton as partners.

6.6 In relation to the Hinkley light emissions – it was confirmed that the arrangement within the planning condition was that EDF would monitor their own light levels. Tim Burton suggested that the first step would be to ask for evidence from EDF that they were keeping within these levels; the JAC agreed they would like to see this. Any independent monitoring would need funding. The consent order is for EDF to demonstrate they are complying, it was agreed that Tim Burton would take forward to EDF.

6.7 The JAC notes the report and supports the recommendation of developing a follow-on Nature and Wellbeing project in partnership between the main Somerset AONB's and the Somerset Wildlife Trust.

7 Quantock Hills AONB Service 2018/2019 Project Highlight Report

7.1 This report represents the expenditure to date, more detail will be provided in the future.

7.2 Julian Taylor asked if the Hills to Levels Natural Flood management will be extended to North Petherton, IP replied that AONB is working with SRA and happy with more applications. Nick Salter added that he met Sabine (SRA) at Kings Cliff yesterday discussing potential measures.

7.3 The JAC notes the report

8 European Protected Species and what this means for woodland managers

8.1 Iain gave a very interesting and informative talk. He reiterated that he is not an expert but gathered information from training he received in April.

8.2 The general feel is there may be small changes that need to be made to accommodate this. The species protected are those declined **across** Europe significantly. 1200 individual species protected (excluding birds).

8.3 Legislation means now an offence to damage or destroy breeding site or resting place of species or plant. This includes ANY damage or destruction of breeding site –don't have to prove that it was deliberate or reckless. It could be an incidental result of lawful operation. Therefore important to be sure EPS species NOT present on an area to be worked.

8.4 Either need a mitigation license from NE, OR with Woodland work FC/NE have developed a Best Practice Guidance. – if you meet their guidance points you don't need license. These points are often also part of Woodland management plans already.

8.5 **Key advice** – plan ahead, research before, do surveys, ecologist may be needed, document everything, be ready to adapt, speak to NE and FC for latest advice.

8.6 Hugh Warmington asked if swaling would be affected. Iain replied that EPS aren't present here. But birds are now covered under habitat regulations, a warm dry March may mean swaling would stop early if ground conditions suitable for nesting birds. Managers must be more open and observant to the local changes and habitat.

8.7 Hugh Warmington pointed out that 50% of woodlands are small and often unmanaged, are these small woodland owners going to be aware or put off so therefore do nothing at all. IP – agreed that small woodland owners probably not aware. It just means if management begins a little more planning required in the longer term. The removal of having to have the license is a good work around.

8.8 Gwil Wren asked if this fits in with woodland plans and felling license – Iain replied that there is an EPS section in template so should be building it in.

8.9 David Stripp (KSM) – asked if there was something for parish mag that they can link to. Nick Salter has a copy of the guidance which he will forward around to the JAC via the AONB Service. – This was done after the meeting.

9 Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget Report 2018/19

9.1 The surplus is reducing; next year onwards there will be a need to look at reducing costs or increasing income. Wait for a bit of guidance on national direction in funding changes etc.

10 Quantock Hills Management Plan Review

10.1 There have been 116 responses to shorter survey and 15 to more detailed survey. A consultation draft document will go to the Management Plan Review Group (OWG) and

be in place for formal public consultation in September and October; a final draft will be brought to the 27th November JAC for sign off by JAC, then to local authorities and NE. JAC agreed the process.

11 AOB

11.1 Terry Ayres asked when a new Parish Rep would be appointed. AONB will chase SALC to start process to appoint a replacement.

11.2 Dates of next year of meetings, some were unsuitable so the following adjustments took place

OWG dates – 6th November 2018, 22nd January 2019, ~~9th April~~ 21st May 2019, ~~9th July~~ 30th July 2019 10am Fyne Court

JAC dates – 27th November 2018, 5th February 2019, ~~7th May~~ 4th June 2019, ~~23rd July~~ 13th August 2019 all 2.15pm locations TBC.

Meeting closed 4pm

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager

Date: 27/11/17

Subject: Team and Partnership Report

AONB Team and Partnership Report

1. Team

1.1 We have successfully recruited a part-time Landscape Planning Officer - Alex Meletiou joined the team at the end of September and has hit the ground running with a combination of researching our historic approach and addressing AONB applications as they arise. It is a 2-day week post and Alex has support from Katy and from me as required. Alongside an understanding of the impacts inappropriate development can have on the AONB landscape Alex brings a working knowledge of farming and land management in Somerset that gives his role in the team an added layer. Alex will report to the JAC every six months with his first report going to the February 2019 JAC meeting.

1.2 Nature and Wellbeing Officer Kristen Lambert has had to delay her return from maternity leave, she will now be rejoining the team at the start of the new year. Danielle has kindly agreed to continue looking after the project until mid-December and Kristen will restart 2nd Jan. Additional funding from Public Health has allowed us to continue the project until September of next year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Danielle for the impressive way she has looked after this project over the course of the year and kept the communications and activities flowing.

1.3 Earlier this month we had a team away-day (we dropped down to Combswich Village Hall for a nearby but very different landscape) to look at some of the broader activities we are currently engaged with and get further team feed-back. It was a fairly intense but I hope interesting morning – I covered some key elements of the revised management plan that will underpin our work, Iain looked at the next stage of turning the objectives and management policies of the revised plan into actions for delivery over the next 5 years, Bill ran a session giving an overview of the developing HLF Landscape Partnership stage 2 bid with opportunities for comment and feed-back and Sammy had a discussion session on the future of our volunteering structure and offer. After all that hard work and discussion we relaxed with some sandwiches and cake and some enjoyed a walk at Steart.

Back in September on a wider scale south-west AONB Teams had a get-together hosted by the Blackdown Hills Team at Hemyock. Alongside workshops and activities team members had the opportunity to network with their opposite numbers from the Mendips, Blackdowns, Cornwall, North Devon, South Devon, East Devon and Tamar Valley AONBs.

Thanks go to Tim Youngs and his team from the Blackdown Hills AONB for arranging and hosting this valuable and enjoyable event.

1.4 Stakeholders event 5th Feb 2019

The next JAC meeting is to be held in Spaxton Village Hall on Tues 5th Feb and we are hoping to have a stakeholder event in the morning, all invited, to share the Management Plan and its implementation and to have a presentation and workshop as part of the development of the HLF Landscape Partnership bid. This will be a chance to influence the shape of the bid before it is finalised around Easter time.

2. Partnership

2.1 Our core-funding Statement of Intent agreed and signed in 2015 (Appendix 1) reaches its end-date 31st March next year. In discussion with the Officers Working Group I am recommending to the JAC that the current Sol is extended for a further year until 31st March 2020 allowing the new Somerset West and Taunton Council to become established before a proper review of the funding agreement is pursued in a year's time. As identified in the document the last two years of funding provision were speculative and are no longer accurate, particularly as WSC had to drop to £1000 pa, agreed with funding partners, due to particular budgetary constraints. I have been advised from SCC that while they have managed to maintain their contribution until now a reduction to £20,000 in the light of current financial pressures may be required for the coming year. Accurate current year partnership core funding is shown in this table:

If the JAC agrees to extend the Sol by a year it will need the agreement of the parent authorities to ratify the arrangement.

2.2 The joint National Association of AONBs bid to Defra on our behalf along with a number of other AONBs to test/trial locally designed and managed Environmental Land Management Schemes is one of well over 100 offers received by Defra. Defra has advised that this number of proposals is greater than expected and is taking longer than intended to assess, however we should hear something soon. Defra has set up a Tests and Trials Advisory Group on which AONBs have a representative, Mark Connelly from the Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board - he recently provided this brief update:

15th November - Defra has been very quiet on tests and trials and cancelled the Advisory Group meeting planned for October. However, the next meeting of the Tests and Trials Advisory Group is Tuesday next week. The timescales currently are for tests and trials 2019 – 2022, with a pilot scheme 2021 – 2024 and the full ELM from 2025. By the end of September Defra had received 115 proposals for tests and trials and committed to responding to all by the end

<u>FY</u> <u>2018/19</u>	
SCC	£21,500
SDC	£11,500
TDBC	£10,000
WSC	£1,000
FC	£19,902
Defra	£163,944

of November. Defra will look to those proposals that test or trial new or innovative approaches or mechanisms that will help develop policy. The actual role of the Advisory Group in all this is not entirely clear. In September Defra had yet to agree priorities for tests and trials and seemed to be looking to the Advisory Group to identify and fill any gaps.

This is a synopsis of the Quantock proposal:

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

2.3 Work on the follow-on Nature and Wellbeing project is developing well with the three AONBs and the Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) working to submit a joint funding bid to the Big Lottery fund. The new project is being developed along similar lines to the current successful model, with greater resources and additional elements. The SWT has employed a specialist company to work on developing the bid and we have a joint workshop with them soon to get into the details, Kristen has agreed to participate as well which really helps the knowledge-base.

2.4 The annual AONB Chairmen’s Conference this year is being held on November 29th in London, unfortunately our Chairman has commitments on that day but Vice-Chairman Mike Caswell has agreed to attend with me. Speakers include: Philip Hygate NAAONB Chairman; The Lord Gardiner of Kimble Under Secretary of State Defra; Crispin Truman Chief Executive CPRE; Sarah Bryan Chief Executive Exmoor National Park Authority; and Julian Glover Leader of the Glover Review of protected landscapes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC supports the Stakeholder Event planned for the morning of the next JAC meeting**
- 2. The JAC agrees the extension of the Sol until April 1st 2020 subject to individual Authorities’ agreement**
- 3. The JAC supports our presence at the Chairmen’s Conference**
- 4. The JAC notes the report**

Appendix 1

Quantock Hills AONB Partnership – Statement of Intent for the period April 1st 2015

- March 31st 2019

As local authorities covering parts of the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty we; Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, West Somerset Council and the Forestry Commission are committed to the purpose and functions of the AONB Partnership as set out in Schedule 1 – Quantock Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

To deliver duties and obligations arising from Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 including the operation and management of an AONB Partnership (“the Partnership”), a Staff Unit (as defined in Schedule 2) to act on behalf of the Partnership in the publishing, monitoring and review of the Management Plan. We commit together with the other partners to provide to the best of our abilities the following contributions (years 2016/17 – 2018/19 are indicative and cannot be confirmed until the preceding January of the financial year).

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>FY 2015/16</u>	<u>FY 2016/17</u>	<u>FY 2017/18</u>	<u>FY 2018/19</u>
SCC	£21,500	£TBC	£TBC	£TBC
SDC	£11,500	£11,550	£11,550	£11,500
TDBC	£10,000	£10,000	£8,000	£8,000
WSC	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
FC	£17,868	£18,386	£19,000	£19,000
Defra	£142,505	£131,877	£121,249	£110,621

Contributions will be paid to the Host Authority by June 30th in each year. The host authority is Somerset County Council and thereby responsible for administration of the Partnership's finances and employment of AONB staff.

In case of redundancy

Whilst it is envisaged that Defra and Local Authority partners contributions will be sufficient to maintain the AONB staff unit and core functions, in the event of a redundancy situation the following will apply :

- Any redundancy payments legally due to AONB Core Staff under Part XI of the Employment Rights Act 1996 or other relevant legislation on termination of employment will be met by an existing specific / ring fenced Partnership budget (Earmarked Reserves) that has been allocated to cover 100% of such costs.
- This budget will be maintained at a level to cover 100% of AONB Unit costs, excluding 50% redundancy cost of the Partnership Ranger (detailed in the Forestry Commission / Quantock Hills AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2014 – 2017), currently £26,050 for FY 2015/16, to cover compulsory redundancy costs of the current team. This figure will be reviewed annually and the budget amended accordingly, using additional funds if required, from partner (excluding Forestry Commission) contributions.
- Any redundancy payments legally due to the Partnership Ranger postholder under Part XI of the Employment Rights Act 1996 or other relevant legislation on termination of employment will be met as outlined in the Forestry Commission / Quantock Hills AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2014 – 2017.

Reduction in contributions

Any intention to reduce funding, from the contributions indicated on page 1, should be given to the AONB and host authority no less than 6 months before the end of the financial year (31st March).

Signed:

Name:

For and on behalf of

Schedule 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

The JAC shall:-

- (a) act as a forum for the discussion and investigation of issues affecting the Quantock Hills AONB and to promote action by the constituent Local Authorities and relevant bodies to further the interests and purposes of the AONB and to recommend action to its constituent organisations;
- (b) co-ordinate the decisions of the local authorities in the exercise of their powers in the AONB, through the implementation of approved and existing Local Plan policies;
- (c) oversee the implementation of the AONB Management Strategy and associated Service and Action Plans;
- (d) guide the operation of the Quantock Hills AONB Service (day to day management of the Service to be undertaken by Somerset County Council);
- (e) make observations on development control matters referred to the Committee for its views by the relevant Local Planning Authorities.

SCHEDULE 2

STAFF UNIT CORE FUNCTIONS

1. MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 1.1 Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the Management Plan
- 1.2 Promoting the AONB vision and Management Plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside
- 1.3 Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan
- 1.4 Accessing resources for management activities
- 1.5 Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB
- 1.6 Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB Partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level
- 1.7 Problem solving with the unit acting as co-ordinator and facilitators

2. ADVISORY / ADVOCACY

- 2.1 Advising Local Authorities and other partners on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to attain the highest possible standards in AONBs
- 2.2 Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally.
- 2.3 Providing landscape related planning advice (to local planning authorities and in conjunction with Natural England as appropriate in line with, and underpinned by protocols)
- 2.4 Financial support for NAAONB
- 2.5 Contribution and support to activity between AONBs and protected landscapes to strengthen the status of the AONBs individually and collectively.

3. MONITORING

- 3.1 To monitor and report on progress against Management Plans and Annual Business Plans to the Partnership.

- 3.2 To provide monitoring and reporting information to Defra in accordance with any guidance issued by Defra.

Chris Edwards
November 2018

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager

Date: 27 Nov 2018

Subject: Management Plan Review

Management Plan Review

3. Progress

1.1

Timeline for the review

Since the last JAC a consultation draft Management Plan has been sent to members and distributed widely for comment. The final consultation with the wider public has now closed and at today's meeting the JAC needs to agree the final draft subject to further proofreading and minor amendment, along with any requirements from the three statutory consultees – Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency – who are currently considering the draft. The consultation draft (and the state of the AONB) Reports can be seen here: <https://www.quantockhills.com/gh-aonb-management-plan>

We are now in the final stages of the Management Plan review and the remaining agreed timetable looks like this:

Nov 2018	Final Draft JAC comments and sign-off	JAC	JAC meeting 27 Nov 2018
Nov – Jan/Feb	Document designed and prepared including any final amendments/ proof-reading changes	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer, MP Review Group (OWG)	Quotation documents being prepared
Jan 2019	Consult Statutory Stakeholders on document	Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England	Consultation underway
Jan-Mar 2019	Local Authorities Adopt Plan	LAs, AONB Manager	
March 2019	Plan Adopted, published and launched	AONB Manager, Comms Officer, Partnership	

2 Final Draft

To gain the final confirmation from the JAC that the document should go forward to Our Local Authorities and Defra once designed and published in its full form, I will bring the Objectives and Management Policies from the draft plan to the JAC as a presentation for support/discussion. This will give the JAC the opportunity to make final comments on the most significant and active elements of the plan, the parts that will be taken into the Delivery Plan to produce actions on the ground. Any other observations and comments on the draft plan will also be welcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 5. The JAC agrees the final draft plan subject to minor further comments/amendments**

Chris Edwards
November 2018

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Owen Jones, Partnership Ranger & Andy Stevenson, Ranger

Date: 27/11/2018

Subject: Rangers Report

INTRODUCTION

The Rangers continue to carry out a very diverse range of activities across the hills by leading public events, doing practical work, supervising volunteers and contractors, and being a general point of contact. During the very hot summer months the Rangers were out checking the heathland to assess the potential for wildfires and promoting through various forms fire safety messages. With little very little grass growing, less vegetation required cutting.

1.0 Habitat Management

- 1.1 Hedgelaying – the Rangers have attended the Somerset Hedge Group meetings and helped train 32 participants on two training days at Perry Farm, West Quantoxhead and Durborough Farm, Aisholt. They will also be helping to run the competition at Cothelstone Manor at the end of November with Open, Novice and Novice Pairs categories being judged.
- 1.2 Cothelstone Hill – a steep section of the north of the site was cut by a contractor using specialist equipment to allow the Exmoor ponies in to graze. This area had been out of bounds for the ponies because of the high bracken and bramble.
- 1.3 The memorial plantation of trees have been watered throughout the dry summer and all appear to be growing. The memorial plaque was recently restored in time for Remembrance Sunday.
- 1.4 During September the car park was closed for a few days in order for the surface to be repaired and the drainage improved – large pot holes had been established which were potentially damaging to visitor's cars.
- 1.5 General work with the volunteers has included cutting and burning rhododendron along the stream in Ramscombe, hedgelaying along the Quantock Greenway in Bicknoller, auditing and upgrading the signage on the Quantock Greenway, repairing the interpretation at St Agnes Well, litter picking and spreading the cuttings from the cut and collect at Frog Hill.
- 1.6 Work with the monthly Working Well group continues to attract more attendees and helpers. Naturally some individuals stop coming because they have recovered and no longer need to come. Projects since the spring have included dry stone walling, digging grips into paths and repairing the bender site.

- 1.7 Swaling – the usual site inspections of potential burns for the upcoming season were carried out with the Commoners, FWAG and Natural England. As previous wet winters have meant the burning plan is behind schedule, this autumn we trained not only our cohort of 15 volunteers but also 13 Commoners to enable us to do more sections when the weather is suitable.
- 1.8 Scheduled Monuments – as a follow up to the valuable survey work that our Heritage Monument volunteers carry out we have recently removed gorse and scrub from a number of barrows in the Beacon Hill and Dowsborough Hill fort areas.

2.0 Visitor Management

- 2.1 The Rangers led and helped with a number of public events throughout the spring and summer including attending Sampford Brett village fete, the Quantock Show and the Halsway Fete. A range of specific topic walks and talks have taken place including the fossil and geology walk and family beach clean day and the family folk and legends of the Quantocks Walk.
- 2.2 The Volunteer Rangers continue a series of information points at the more popular car parks during the summer. These are a key method of interaction especially for the day visitor.
- 2.3 Sadly the annual deer rut walk had to be cancelled due to poor weather.
- 2.4 Organisers of public run events have been better at communicating such as the Quantock Quake, Duke of Edinburgh groups and horse rides, but there is always scope to improve.
- 2.5 Monitoring of nuisance and damaging activities is a regular part of the role and throughout the summer large scale parties or groups having BBQs have had to be dealt with. Small scale issues have also been detected such as illegal camping and the use of routes without public access.
- 2.6 Communications with the Police and PCSO's continues to improve with regular patrols carried out with the Rangers at different times of the week and day. A recent Rural Crime Day campaign by the Police meant a Ranger patrolled with a PCSO and identified cars parked in public places with valuables on display – follow letters and talking to visitors should help to prevent future crime.
- 2.7 There were 6 cases of fly-tipping reported to the AONB Service. Reporting to the relevant District Council has resulted in relatively swift removal of the litter.
- 2.8 Rangers and Volunteer Rangers helped run one off events with local schools, youth groups and cub scout packs; for example 25 scouts from Bishops Lydeard had an evening of mapping and trail reading skills at Cothelstone Hill.

3.0 Wildlife Monitoring

- 3.1 Over the summer months Rangers, along with specialist volunteers have been out and inspected the nest boxes for the Pied fly catcher's. These important African migrants have a monitoring line in Hodder's Combe, Holford Combe, Slaughterhouse Combe and on Over Stowey Custom Common. A number of the boxes had birds nesting that had been ringed in previous years and returned to the same location.
- 3.2 The annual tick survey carried out by the Rangers in May across a number of locations on the hills. The survey takes place at 18 National Parks and AONBs around England and Wales, and the good news is that the Quantocks showed very low levels of ticks carrying disease. Only one of the 170 ticks collected 2014-17 inclusive from 6 popular Quantock locations has tested positive for Borrelia (possibly Lyme Disease). Of the six south-west sites tested the Quantocks under 1% prevalence is among the lowest with some areas showing 8% and 9%.
- 3.3 Summer Heathland Bird Survey - this important 6 yearly survey took place during May, June & July over the 44 sq kms covering the Quantocks. Once collated this report will help influence how the Quantocks including the Common may be managed and form an important dataset for future projects.

November 2018: Andy Stevenson
Owen Jones

Paper D



To. Quantock Hills JAC

Status: Quantock Hills AONB Service 2018/19 Budget Highlight Report (mth 6 – 50%)

Date: 27/11/2018.

Author: Iain Porter

	Measure	Budget	Performance	Comments	RAG
CORE	£ / % spent to date	£271,995	£129,088 / 48%	Factoring future commitments predicted £1k overspend in core to be drawn from RIA	😊
	£ / % spent to date [salaries, NI, SA]	£216,133	£102,765 / 48%	Slightly lower due to break in landscape planner post	😊
	£ / % spent to date [training]	£1,550	£572 / 37%	On track	😊
	£ / % spent to date [rent, rates, electricity, water, premise insurance]	£13,428	£2,598 / 19%	No rent payment associated with office though this is due to be paid end of calendar year.	😊
	£ / % spent to date [stationary, post, phones, printing]	£2,400	£826 / 34%	Expenditure appears low but phones and printing charges come out in March.	😊
	£ / % spent to date [travel, vehicle costs]	£17,484	£14,446 / 83%	Appears high due to lease costs coming out in April	😊
	£ / % spent to date [Equipment, maintenance, clothing, uniform]	£4,100	£1,938 / 47%	Expenditure on track	😊
	£ / % spent to date [Literature, publications, publicity]	£600	£126 / 21%	Expenditure on track	😊
	£ / % spent to date [Meeting costs, hospitality]	£800	£270 / 34%	Expenditure on track	😊
	£ / % spent to date [Management fee, insurance]	£8,700	£0 / 0%	Expenditure due March 2019	😊
	£ / % spent to date [Memberships]	£2,500	£2,658 / 106%	No further expenditure.	😐
	£ / % spent to date [Research & Development]	£4,300	£2,308 / 54%	Expenditure on track	😊
	£ / % income [core]	-£263,922	-£29,411 / 11%	Income from Defra due Jan 2019 and May 2019. Some issues with contribution payments from LA's.	😐
	Summary – Core Budget deficit was expected to be £8,000 which was to be met from surplus in RIA. Taking into account commitments core budget predicted to be £1,000 overspent at end of financial year.				
PROJECT	Project	Budget	Performance	Comments	RAG
	£ / % spend to date [Nature & Wellbeing Project]	£89,577	£68,481 / 77%	Yr 3 of 4yr project. Public Health provision of additional grant of £17.5k Sept 2018.	😊
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - GQLDF]	£152,103	£71,585 / 47%	Yr 5 of 7 yr project. Revised timeline for expenditure to take account of potential link with QH LPS. 2 nd phase budget released autumn 2017.	😊

	£ / % spend to date [HPC - LIS]	£349,005	£245,000 / 70%	Yr 4 of 7 yr project. Expenditure rear loaded due to planning work needed. 2 nd phase budget released autumn 2017	😊			
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - LMSS]	£27,500	£23,105 / 84%	Yr 3 (final year) of LMSS projects. Mgt fee to be applied at end of project	😊			
	£ / % spend to date [HE-CB]	£5,286	£1,879 / 36%	Yr3 (final year). Historic England Capacity Building Project. Expenditure rear loaded	😐			
	£ / % spend to date [FWAG-SW/SRA - HTL]	£8,762	£8762 / 100%	Expenditure from 2017/18 project.	😊			
	£ / % spend to date [Access]	£1,000	£0 / 0%	Expenditure on target	😊			
	£ / % spend to date [Quantock Views]	£0	£480 / 480%	Residual expenditure from 2017/18. No further expenditure expected.	😐			
	£ / % spend to date [Landscape Partnership]	£101,300	£25,593 / 25%	Low cost as contracts have not yet been paid. Considering committed expenditure requirement to find additional £3k	😐			
RIA	Carry forward (b/f 2017/18)	-£62,654	-£62,654		😊			
	LMSS recharge	£0	-£10,800	Miscoded should be income in core	😊			
	Viament to Amenity Land	£9,100	£9,252		😊			
	Viament to Landscape Partnership	£9,451	£9,451		😊			
SUMMARY	Budget	Expenditure		Income		Balance		Revised figures based on known expenditure commitments and income. Project figures shown for in-year budgets only.
		Orig	Rev	Orig	Rev	Orig	Rev	
	Core	£271,995	£267,595	-£263,922	-£248,530	£8,073	£19,065	Lower income due to mis-coding of LMSS income
	Project	£26,072	£43,552	-£26,868	-£28,454	-£796	£15,098	£15k c/f from RIA not vied into budget. N&W project additional income & expenditure now included
	Landscape Ptn Scheme	£96,451	£94,880	-£96,451	-£91,621	£0	£3,259	Includes additional predicted costs
	Projects [HPC]	£129,000	£129,000	-£129,000	-£129,000	£0	£0	
	RIA	£34,465	£18,703	-£62,654	-£86,592	-£28,189	-£67,889	Lower expenditure as project income not vied to correct budget line. High income due to miscoding of LMSS income
	Total	£557,983	£553,729	-£578,895	-£584,197	-£20,912	-£33,726	
				Earmarked Reserve		£24,100	£24,100	To cover redundancy costs of whole team. Awaiting HR advice on updated value.
				Surplus / Deficit		£3,188	-£9,626	

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager

Date: 27 Nov 2018

Subject: NPs and AONBs Review Update

National Parks and AONBs Review

1. Call for Evidence from Julian Glover

Glover Review of Designated Landscapes - Call for Evidence Launch

The Landscapes Review launched in May and since then the advisory panel and I have visited many of our National Parks and AONBs and talked to people who live, work in, visit and care for them. I want to reiterate my thanks for the efforts put in to arrange so many interesting conversations as well as for the hospitality. For those areas we are yet to visit, we are getting dates in diaries and looking forward to meeting soon.

The conversations so far have given the advisory panel and me a huge amount to contemplate, highlighting common themes as well as those which affect just some areas.

We will continue these conversations as the review progresses but we want everyone with a view to be able to set it out and are therefore opening a call for evidence on Saturday 20 October. In it, we ask open questions across a range of issues that allow people to set out their thoughts.

The questions will be hosted on the Defra consultation website and will go live on 20 October, accessible through these links: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/> and <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence>. The deadline for responses will be 18 December.

I am sure you will take the time to respond and I look forward to this in due course. In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could also publicise the call for evidence to your network so that anyone with views can contribute.

Finally, as you may know, I have asked National Association of AONBs for a repeat of the meeting we had in June at the Defra offices with Chairs and Chief Executives – we hope to set this up early in the New Year so we can have a conversation informed by the call for evidence.

Yours sincerely,
Julian Glover

- On behalf of the JAC I gave an initial response welcoming the Call for Evidence and mentioning that we hadn't seen anyone from the panel in the Quantocks yet and received the following response:

Hi Chris,

Although the review panel have been visiting National Parks primarily this year, the plan is to visit AONBs in the coming months and next year – depending on panel and AONB availability. At the moment we are co-ordinating who can visit each one and when, so we will be in touch in due course.

Please feel free to share the Call for Evidence, looking forward to receiving your responses.

Kind regards,

Jean

Jean Comrie | Designated Landscapes Review Secretariat | Natural Environment Directorate |
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | 1st Floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street
Jean.Comrie@defra.gsi.gov.uk



2 Glover Review Objectives

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

- the existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- the alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment
- the case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- how to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- the financing of National Parks and AONBs
- how to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- how to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- how well National Parks and AONBs support communities

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

3 The Consultation Website Questions (Closes 18th Dec)

Before anything else we would love to know what makes National Parks and AONBs special to you. We invite you to submit a recent picture which sums up what is special to you about our designated landscapes. It could be a place, a person, on a farm or of plants and wildlife.

Part 1 - Opening thoughts - We would like any opening thoughts on the role played by National Parks and AONBs - you may want to make a more detailed suggestion further on.

- What do you think works overall about the present system of National Parks and AONBs in England? Add any points that apply specifically to only National Parks or AONBs.
- What do you think does not work overall about the system and might be changed? Add any points that apply specifically to National Parks or AONBs.

Part 2 - Views - We'd like to hear views on particular issues.

- What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in nature conservation and biodiversity? Could they do more to enhance our wildlife and support the recovery of our natural habitats?
- What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in shaping landscape and beauty, or protecting cultural heritage?
- What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in working with farmers and land managers and how might this change as the current system of farm payments is reformed?
- What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in supporting and managing access and recreation?
- What views do you have about the way National Park and AONB authorities affect people who live and work in their areas? Are they properly supporting them and what could be done differently?
- What views do you have on the role National Park and AONB authorities play on housing and transport in their areas?

Part 3 - Current ways of working - We'd like to ask some specific questions about the way National Parks and AONBs work at the moment.

- What views do you have on the way they are governed individually at the moment? Is it effective or does it need to change, if so, how?
- What views do you have on whether they work collectively at the moment, for instance to share goals, encourage interest and involvement by the public and other organisations?
- What views do you have on their efforts to involve people from all parts of society, to encourage volunteering and improve health and well-being?
- What views do you have on the way they are funded and how this might change?
- What views do you have on the process of designation - which means the way boundaries are defined and changed?
- What views do you have on whether areas should be given new designations? For instance, the creation of new National Parks or AONBs, or new types of designations for marine areas, urban landscapes or those near built-up areas
- Are there lessons that might be learnt from the way designated landscapes work in other parts of the United Kingdom, or abroad?

Part 4 - Closing thoughts

- Do you think the terms currently used are the right ones? Would you suggest an alternative title for AONBs, for instance and if so what?
- The review has been asked to consider how designated landscapes work with other designations such as National Trails, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs). Do you have any thoughts on how these relationships work and whether they could be improved?

- Do you have any other points you would like to make that are not covered above?

4. The NAAONBs Draft Response

The NAAONBs draft response is based on consultation with AONB lead officers across the country and will become a finalised “prospectus” for submission from the National Association to the Glover Review:

Glover Review

National headline messages

Purposes

The purposes of England’s Designated Landscapes (AONBs and National Parks) must be future proofed with focus on enhancement and alignment with the principles of the 25 YEP

- The purposes of England’s Designated Landscapes should be aligned. In bringing about an alignment, the following should be considered:
- The importance of a ‘first purpose’ that applies equally to AONBs and National Parks: ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage’. Note that the term ‘wildlife and cultural heritage’ does not currently apply to the AONB purpose.
- A second aligned purpose would specifically relate to recreation, formalising the current supplementary purpose, by the addition of a statutory purpose that focused on the promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of areas of outstanding natural beauty by the public. This is in recognition that all AONB partnerships already play a major role in delivering opportunities for outdoor understanding, enjoyment and recreation in England and indeed operate as if this was a formal purpose of designation. In our view this purpose should be expressed in way common to both Designated Landscape classifications.

As with the current National Park purposes, any second purpose that applies to AONBs should be supported by the principle that the delivery of that second purpose must be set within limits implied by the delivery of the first, and where conflict exists; the first purpose will outweigh the second

Governance

- The mechanism by which the designation’s purposes are delivered will vary according to local requirements; AONB governance models should therefore continue to reflect local requirements.
- In order to better utilise limited resources, we suggest extending the requirement to review the AONB Management Plan to a period of 10 years with a shorter term within which to review local Action Plans.
- We recognise that there is a need to strengthen national governance and improve the accessibility of national support for individual AONB partnerships and teams.
- Likewise, we would like to see a strengthening of local governance through improved accountability. Within the parameters of a local authority employer/employee relationship AONB staff should also be clearly accountable to AONB partnerships.
- Local governance models need to ensure national status is recognised, possibly through improved terms of reference for members and/or the use of national appointees.

Land Management

- It is important that the Designated Landscape Management Organisations and their Management Plans have a central role in the restoration of nature and ecosystem services. This should be ensured through development and support for the role AONB teams will play in delivering on Outcome 1c of Biodiversity 2020, Net Gain, and their crucial role in supporting a Nature Recovery Network.
- Designated Landscape management plans should play a strong role in setting the framework for the delivery of a new Environmental Land Management Schemes
AONB partnership staff teams should be given the capacity to play a leading role in the local delivery of agri-environment schemes
- It is essential that government helps optimise the ability of Designated Landscapes to deliver for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Planning

- Utilising the opportunities afforded by an Environment Act, strengthen the Duty of Regard through its replacement with a Duty of Due Regard
- Natural England to significantly raise the profile of the Duty of Due Regard
- Consider legislation that places a duty on relevant authorities to support the delivery of the AONB management plan
- Using the provision set out in Article 18, Schedule 4 of the Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO) 2015 give AONB partnerships statutory consultee status for Town and Country planning matters.
- Encourage the production of dedicated Development Plan documents for AONBs where appropriate
- Government to support a consistent cross departmental policy approach to sustainable development in Designated Landscapes
- Government monitoring of Planning Authorities' performance in Designated Landscapes and associated accountability with incentives for Planning Authorities' performance.
- Ability of Designated Landscapes Management Organisations to 'call in' specific cases for scrutiny.
- Consider extending Designated Landscapes offshore into the marine environment and giving their Management organisations a role in achieving the co-ordinated management of the coast and marine.

Resourcing

- It is essential that core resourcing is aligned with the effective delivery of statutory purposes
- Address the issue of vulnerability that can be caused by the relationship with host Local Authority
- Five-year funding packages agreed with government in line with the mid-term review of 10-year Management Plans, based on clear and agreed outcomes and return on investment.
- Adequate funding of Town and Country planning activity so that designated planning officers can effectively manage major planning applications and properly manage a new statutory consultee responsibility
- There is a clear need for a national statutory advocate for landscape, championing the role of AONBs across government

- The provision of a dedicated Sustainable Development Fund for both AONBs and National Parks to enable AONB teams to better support community and business activity allied to the purpose of designation.

Status and profile

- Retain the statutory designation of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but support the rebranding of AONBs as 'National Landscapes'.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 6. The JAC advises on responding to the Call for Evidence**
- 7. The JAC notes the report**

Chris Edwards

November 2018