

Appendix G - The Assessment Matrix of the revised High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

The assessment matrix is a list of the objectives of the revised High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029 assessed against the conservation objectives of the European sites. The assessment was designed to determine whether or not a plan option (objective, in this case) is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. Consultees should also consider other relevant plans and projects when looking at the matrix.

Three possible outcomes from undertaking the screening process were chosen:

<p>Positive Reinforcement Where High Weald Management Plan objectives and designation objectives are clearly aligned, in these cases positive reinforcement is the result in the matrix.</p>	
<p>Not Applicable/No Effect Where the two sets of objectives are un-related or have no effect upon one another then the matrix has been left uncoloured.</p>	
<p>Potential Conflict or Uncertain Effect This outcome relates to both the compatibility of the objectives and/or management of the sites. Either where compatibility issues are known or where there is the potential for incompatibility.</p>	

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-24 objectives			Ashdown Forest SAC	Ashdown Forest SPA	Dungeness SAC	Dungeness, Romney Marsh to Rye Bay SPA and Ramsar Site	Hastings Cliffs SAC	Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site
Key Component	Objective code	Objective	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its qualifying features: European dry heaths and Northern Atlantic wet heaths habitats.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to maintaining or restoring the site for its qualifying species and populations of: <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> Nightjar and <i>Sylvia undata</i> Dartford Warbler.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its qualifying feature: Annual vegetation of drift lines and Perennial vegetation of stoney banks.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the qualifying species for which the site was designated.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its qualifying features: Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic & Baltic coasts.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, for the populations of <i>Anisus vorticulus</i> Ramshorn snail and other species for which the site was designated.
Natural Systems	G1	To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies.			Upstream river & wetland restoration within the AONB will directly & indirectly benefit this downstream site	Upstream river & wetland restoration within the AONB will directly & indirectly benefit this downstream site		Upstream river & wetland restoration within the AONB will directly & indirectly benefit this downstream site
	G2	To protect landform and geological features including, sandstone outcrops.					SAC managed to allow erosion which could conflict with G2.	
	G3	To pursue net zero across the High Weald without compromising its characteristic landscape beauty.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitat conditions.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitat conditions.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitat conditions.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats. Improvements in the AONB would affect areas outside its boundary.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitat conditions.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats. Improvements in the AONB would affect areas outside its boundary.
	G4	To restore soil health across the High Weald.	Restoration of soil health including soil biodiversity supports above ground biodiversity.	Restoration of soil health including soil biodiversity supports above ground biodiversity.				Restoration of soil health including soil biodiversity supports above ground biodiversity.

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Settlement	S1	To protect the historic pattern and character of settlement.						
	S2	To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure new development reflects the character of the High Weald in its siting, scale, layout and design.						
	S3	To conserve the distinct built heritage of the High Weald						
Routeways	R1	To maintain the historic pattern, morphology and features of routeways.						
	R2	To enhance the ecological function of routeways.	Where routeways pass through Ashdown Forest this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways pass through Ashdown Forest this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways connect through to Dungeness this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways pass through Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay this objective supports designated species.	Where routeways pass through Hastings Cliffs this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways connect through to the Pevensey Levels this objective supports habitats
Woodland	W1	To maintain and restore the existing extent and pattern of woodland cover and particularly ancient woodland.	Retention of woodland could frustrate heathland restoration projects.	Retention of woodland could frustrate heathland restoration projects.				
	W2	To protect and restore the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.	This objective supports the woodland habitats of Ashdown Forest	This objective supports the woodland habitats of Ashdown Forest				
	W3	To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands.						
	W4	To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.	Some forestry operations could damage habitats and species.	Some forestry operations could damage habitats and species.				
Fields & Heath	FH1	To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.	Intensive farming methods could damage habitats both directly and indirectly	Intensive farming methods could damage habitats both directly and indirectly		Intensive farming methods could damage habitats both directly and indirectly	Intensive farming methods could damage habitats both directly and indirectly	Intensive farming methods could damage habitats indirectly at Pevensey Level
	FH2	To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.						
	FH3	To protect and enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.	This objective supports the heathland habitats of Ashdown Forest	This objective supports the heathland habitats of Ashdown Forest		This objective supports the farmed habitats of Romney Marsh	This objective supports the farmed habitats of Hastings Cliffs	This objective supports the farmed habitats of the Pevensey Levels
	FH4	To protect individual archaeological features as well as historic assets and pattern of field and heath.						
Dark skies	DS1	To preserve the dark skies of the High Weald AONB by minimising light pollution, obtrusive external lighting and internal light spill from domestic, commercial and	This objective supports dark skies policies for the designated site, and to promote intrinsically dark skies locally	This objective supports dark skies policies for the designated site, and to promote intrinsically dark skies locally	This objective supports dark skies policies for the designated site, and to promote intrinsically dark skies locally	This objective supports dark skies policies for the designated site, and to promote intrinsically dark skies locally	This objective supports dark skies policies for the designated site, and to promote intrinsically dark skies locally	This objective supports dark skies policies for the designated site, and to promote intrinsically dark skies locally

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-24 objectives		Ashdown Forest SAC	Ashdown Forest SPA	Dungeness SAC	Dungeness, Romney Marsh to Rye Bay SPA and Ramsar Site	Hastings Cliffs SAC	Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site
	public premises in both existing and new developments within the High Weald, and from highways lighting.						
	DS2 To protect wildlife and habitats for wildlife from light pollution across the High Weald.	This objective supports a wide range of species found on the Ashdown Forest including the species the site is designated for	This objective supports a wide range of species found on the Ashdown Forest including the species the site is designated for	This objective supports a wide range of species found on Dungeness	This objective supports a wide range of species found Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay including the species the site is designated for	This objective supports a wide range of species found at Hastings Cliffs including the species the site is designated for	This objective supports a wide range of species found on the Pevensey Levels including the species the site is designated for
Perceptual and aesthetic qualities	PQ1 To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the High Weald's character and aesthetic qualities, and to promote and facilitate contributions by communities and individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the High Weald.						
	PQ2 To protect the unspoilt rural landscape with its intrinsic sense of naturalness, valued views and the extent of green space which foster experiences of rurality and tranquillity.	Promotes the unique landscape and valued views of open heathland of the Ashdown Forest.	Promotes the unique landscape and valued views of open heathland of the Ashdown Forest.	Promotes the unique landscape of open vegetated shingle of the Dungeness.	Promotes the unique landscape of open marsh land and vegetated shingle of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay.	Promotes the unique character of vegetated sandstone cliffs at Hastings Cliffs.	Promotes the unique open landscape and valued view across the Pevensey Levels.
	PQ3 To foster and promote equitable access and informal enjoyment of the High Weald landscape and the integrated management of its resources for the enjoyment of natural beauty by all.	Increased public access can be harmful to habitats and species.	Increased public access can be harmful to habitats and species.	Increased public access can be harmful to habitats and species.	Increased public access can be harmful to habitats and species.	Increased public access can be harmful to habitats and species.	Increased public access can be harmful to habitats and species.
Land-based economy and rural living	LBE1 To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.		Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.
	LBE2 To reconnect settlements, residents, and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside, and maintain and improve rural amenities and services that support communities within the context of the rural settlement pattern.						
	LBE3 To improve infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing and workspaces) and skills development for rural						

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		communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty.						

Amendments Made to Management Plan to Avoid Potential Conflicts and Uncertain Impacts

HWAONB MP Objective	Natura 2000 Site	Potential Conflict or Uncertain Effect	Action Taken
G2: To protect the sandstone outcrops, soils and other important landform and geological features	Hastings Cliffs SAC	SAC managed to allow erosion which could conflict with G2.	Rationale for G2: 'To conserve landform and topography on which the High Weald's character depends, <u>and maintain nationally important geological exposures, allowing for erosion where appropriate</u> , conserving the fern, moss and liverwort communities they support and protecting their value as significant sites of prehistoric archaeology in the AONB.'
W1: To maintain and restore the existing extent and pattern of woodland cover and particularly ancient woodland.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA	Retention of woodland could frustrate heathland restoration projects.	Wooded Heath added to the Key Characteristic list for the Woodland component
W4: To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA	Some forestry operations could damage habitats and species.	Woodland Action: 'Seek to foster forestry operations – usually small scale and traditional management - that do not damage characteristic habitats and species.'
FH1: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA; Dungeness and Romney Marsh SPA and Ramsar Site; Hastings Cliff SAC, and Pevensey Levels SAC	Intensive farming measures could damage habitats both directly and indirectly.	Regenerative agriculture promoted throughout the Management Plan, especially in the Drivers for Change. Regenerative agriculture works with nature rather than against it.
PQ3: T To foster and promote equitable access and informal enjoyment of the High Weald landscape and the integrated management of its resources for the enjoyment of natural beauty by all.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA; Dungeness SAC, Dungeness and Romney Marsh SPA and Ramsar Site; Hastings Cliff SAC, and Pevensey Levels SAC	Increased public access can be destructive to habitats and species.	The objective rationale states 'To meet the demand for informal recreation from residents and those living close to the AONB, <u>whilst ensuring infrastructure, services and activities are consistent with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and its quiet enjoyment for this and future generations.</u> '
LBE1: To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA; Dungeness and Romney Marsh SPA and Ramsar Site; Hastings Cliff SAC, and Pevensey Levels SAC.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Caveat in the Land-based Economy 'N.B. For clarity, the pursuance of the above objectives or actions set out in this section <u>should not harm the other character components or be at the expense of their contribution to the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.</u> '