HIGH WEALD JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee will be held at 10:30 am on Monday 25 March 2013 at East Court, East Grinstead Town Council, College Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3LT

SIMON BAILEY
Clerk to the High Weald AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

* Tea and Coffee available from 10.00 am

PRESENTATIONS 10.30

Restocking the High Weald – Dr Bill Vorley, International Institute for Environment & Development

Weald Forest Ridge: Conclusions – Simon Aguss, High Weald AONB Unit

BUSINESS MEETING

A G E N D A

1. Apologies

2. Members' Interests

   Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of any interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declaration at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.

3. Urgent matters

   Members are asked to raise any urgent matters at this stage and not at the end of the meeting. The Chairman will decide whether the JAC should discuss any items so raised but asks members to give her prior notification of such matters unless urgency prevents it.

4. Minutes of the JAC meeting – 14 November 2012

   To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the JAC held on 14 November 2012 (page 1)

5. Minutes of the Management Board – 27 February 2013

To note the minutes of the Management Board meeting held on 27 February 2013 (page 7)

6. Minutes of the Officer Steering Group – 25 February 2013

To note the minutes of the Officer Steering meeting held on 25 February 2013 (page 11)

7. Matters arising from Minutes

8. Revenue Budget 2013/14

To consider a report by the Deputy Treasurer (page 21)

9. Management Plan Review

To consider a report by the AONB Director (page 31)

10. High Weald JAC Projects

To consider a verbal report by the AONB Director

11. High Weald AONB Unit Staff

To consider a report by the AONB Director (page 37)

12. Risk Management

To consider a report by the AONB Director (page 39). Risk Log attached at page 43

13. Any other business
Taste of Kent press release

To: ALL MEMBERS OF THE HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No. 8

Committee:	**High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee**
Date:	**25 March 2013**
Title of Report:	**Revenue Budget 2013/14**
By:	**Deputy Treasurer to the Joint Advisory Committee**
Purpose of Report:	**To consider the Revenue Budget 2013/14**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. **approve the Revenue Budget for 2013/14;**
2. **thank Defra and partner authorities for their contributions towards core costs and High Weald Heroes.**

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 This report sets out the budget for 2013/14 following a consultation approved by this committee in November 2012.

1.2 The budget supports the High Weald AONB Business Plan 2013-2014 which sets out how the High Weald AONB Unit will deliver its core functions and enable implementation of the 2nd edition of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004.

2. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

2.1 This report details the forecast out-turn for the current financial year and the proposed budget for 2013/14. Appendix A summarises the forecast out-turn for 2012/13, the proposed budget for 2013/14 and the indicative budget for 2014/15.

2.2 The budget assumes that the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) contribution will be £276,500 for 2013/14 which is 84% of their 2010/11 contribution (£329,700). This contribution has still to be confirmed – any changes will be reported to the JAC.

2.3 Nett savings of £1,700 have been required to achieve a balanced budget.

3. BUDGET 2012/13

3.1 The forecast out-turn for the current financial year shows a small surplus of £2,700. The forecast reserves at 31st March 2013 are £88,100.

4. BUDGET 2013/14

<u>Core Budget – Expenditure</u>

4.1 The budget for 2013/14 is presented in Appendix A. It is based on the 2012/13 figures with inflation at the ESCC applied rate of 0% for salaries and 0% for other costs, although there could still be inflationary pressures to costs. The budget allows for:

(i) Staff costs: a core team of 5.7 FTE staff with incremental progression as a result of revised grades following the Single Status Review of four posts, contributions to the pension fund of 20.10% and inflation at 0%. Savings of £3,000 have been made through reducing the budget available to backfill the vacant Interpretation officer and Finance officer posts.

(ii) Accommodation/office equipment costs: rent, rates, office equipment, office maintenance and running costs. It includes savings of £2,000 through removing the budget for ongoing website development.

(iii) A cost of £18,800 arising from the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) accommodation pricing policy. However ESCC make a contribution to match this cost and therefore there is no cost to the JAC.

(iv) Core communications: a standstill budget that covers the production of the annual review and minor public relations costs.

(v) Partnership running costs: JAC meetings, events, training and audit fees. Savings of £4,000 have been made through ceasing the contract with ESCC for the JAC's clerk services. From 2013/14 the clerk service will be provided in house by the High Weald JAC's team support officer.

(vi) Support services: East Sussex County Council's charges for IT, personnel and financial support.

4.2 In order to achieve a balanced budget, Nett savings of £1,700 have been made, summarised as follows:

Incremental staff costs	£7,300
Staff savings	-£3,000
Accommodation/Office Equipment	-£2,000
Partnership running costs	-£4,000
Total Nett Savings	**£1,700**

Core Budget – Income

Defra

4.3 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have approved a funding agreement with AONBs which provides for a flexible 'single pot' contribution for core, projects and the sustainable development fund (SDF). Defra has confirmed it will reduce its funding to AONBs by 21.5% over four years from 2011/12 to 2014/15, compared with the 2010/11 levels The JAC's budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 therefore assume grant reductions of 5.4% each year.

4.4 The 2012/13 contribution was £294,170 which has been allocated as follows:-

- £232,570 to core expenditure
- £61,600 to the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Projects.

4.5 Defra's total contribution for 2013/14 is shown in appendix A and has been reduced to £276,500 (£214,700 to Core and £61,800 to SDF and Projects), to reflect 84% of the 2010/11 contribution.

Local Authority Contributions

4.6 The respective levels of support from each authority are shown in Appendix A.

4.7 In respect of core costs, all authorities, except Kent County Council, have confirmed their contributions at 2012/13 levels.

4.8 High Weald Heroes has attracted support from the following authorities: East and West Sussex County Councils, and Surrey County Council; the Borough Councils of Hastings, Tonbridge and Malling, and Crawley; and the District Councils of Horsham, Sevenoaks, Wealden, and Mid-Sussex. A sum of £3,925 is available to attract external funding to continue the project in those funding partners areas.

Self funding projects

4.9 JAC expenditure on self-funding projects is presented at Appendix B and is estimated to be £110,100.

4.10 It is proposed to allocate £61,800 from the Defra 'single pot' to the Sustainable Development Fund (£30,230) and other projects (£31,570).

4.11 The total contribution to JAC expenditure on self-funding projects is estimated at £110,100. Appendix B indicates contributions from local authority partners to projects, including High Weald Heroes.

4.12 All projects have a balanced budget over the total life of the project. Income is allocated on a pro rata basis over the relevant number of financial years to give a Nett balance of zero.

4.13 A sum of £250,000 has been contributed by East Sussex County Council towards the developing Battle and Brede Landscape Partnership Scheme and is being held as project income in advance.

5. FINANCIAL ISSUES 2014/15 AND BEYOND

5.1 To achieve a balanced budget for 2013/14 savings of £1,700 have been made in the JAC's budget through reductions to staff costs, partnership costs and accommodation costs.

5.2 Based on 2013/14 assumptions it is forecast that the contributions from Defra and local authorities will result in a deficit of £20,400 in 2014/15. This assumes the Defra contribution will be reduced by a further 5.4% in 2014/15 in line with recent announcements from Defra. It does not take into account the impact of the Single Status Review of the Administrator and Team Support Officer posts on the staff budget. In view of this potential deficit, the JAC will need to consider further savings options in future years to avoid depleting reserves, as this course of action is not sustainable in the longer term. There needs to be a minimum level of reserves of 5% (£17,000). The estimated reserves at 31 March 2015 would be £65,500 if the potential 2014/15 deficit of £20,400 is funded from reserves.

5.3 This situation is set to continue with further reductions in the Defra contribution, inflation and staff pay increments increasing the potential annual deficit in future years.

5.4 Given the difficulties of securing external funding the JAC could consider re-allocating Defra funding from projects to core functions in order to ensure there is a capacity to deliver smaller partnership projects. However this would limit the scope to attract external funding for projects.

5.5 The number and scale of self-financing projects will continue to decline in future years as public sector budgets reduce and there is less local authority match funding to help draw in grant aid from external sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Interreg.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The 2013/14 core budget is a balanced budget which provides the JAC with the capacity to deliver its core functions; albeit communication activity will continue at a significantly reduced level.

6.2 The project budget reflects the fact that a number of long standing partnership projects ended in 2012/2013 and that new projects are moremodest in scale.

6.3 On this basis the JAC is recommended to agree the budget.

MO HEMSLEY
Deputy Treasurer to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REVISED FORECAST 2012/13, DRAFT BUDGET 2013/14 AND INDICATIVE BUDGET 2014/15

2011/12 Actual		2012/13		2013/14				2014/15
		Budget	Forecast	Original Budget	Inflation	Other	Budget	Indicative Budget
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Actual	Details							
	Expenditure							
227.1	Staff costs	223.7	223.9	223.7	0.0	4.3	228.0	232.9
44.5	Accommodation/office equipment	42.0	44.4	42.0	0.0	(2.0)	40.0	40.0
17.0	Additional ESCC charge for accommodation	18.8	18.8	18.8	0.0	0.0	18.8	18.8
7.7	Communication costs	3.5	3.7	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.5	3.5
12.2	Partnership running costs	10.7	11.1	10.7	0.0	(4.0)	6.7	6.7
28.2	Support services	27.3	27.3	27.3	0.0	0.0	27.3	27.3
336.7	**Total Core Expenditure**	**326.0**	**329.2**	**326.0**	**0.0**	**(1.7)**	**324.3**	**329.2**
735.1	JAC expenditure on self-funding projects	245.1	315.3	238.0	0.0	(194.0)	44.0	44.0
79.4	Defra expenditure on self-funding projects	74.6	74.6	74.6	0.0	(12.8)	61.8	57.3
7.2	Project Enabling Fund expenditure on self-funding projects	15.3	2.1	15.3	0.0	(13.9)	1.4	1.4
821.7	Total JAC expenditure on self-funding projects	**335.0**	**392.0**	**327.9**	**0.0**	**(220.7)**	**107.2**	**102.7**
1158.4	**Total Gross Expenditure**	**661.0**	**721.2**	**653.9**	**0.0**	**(222.4)**	**431.5**	**431.9**
	Core Contributions							
232.5	Defra	219.6	232.6	219.6	0.0	(4.9)	214.7	201.4
22.4	East Sussex County Council	22.4	22.4	22.4	0.0	0.0	22.4	22.4
17.0	Additional ESCC contribution for accommodation	18.8	18.8	18.8	0.0	0.0	18.8	18.8
13.3	Kent County Council	12.2	12.2	12.2	0.0	(2.2)	10.0	10.0
9.3	West Sussex County Council	9.3	9.3	9.3	0.0	0.0	9.3	9.3
2.9	Surrey County Council	2.9	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.9
7.2	Wealden District	7.2	7.2	7.2	0.0	0.0	7.2	7.2
7.2	Rother District Council	7.2	7.2	7.2	0.0	0.0	7.2	7.2
5.6	Mid Sussex District Council	5.6	5.6	5.6	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6
6.7	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	6.7	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7
4.7	Horsham District Council	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.0	0.0	4.7	4.7
3.6	Sevenoaks District Council	3.6	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	3.6	3.6
0.8	Ashford Borough Council	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
1.5	Hastings Borough Council	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5
2.2	Tandridge District Council	2.2	2.2	2.2	0.0	0.0	2.2	2.2
0.3	Crawley Borough Council	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
0.3	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
1.7	Other Income	0.7	-6.4	0.7	0.0	3.3	4.0	4.0
339.2	**Total Core Contributions**	**326.0**	**331.9**	**326.0**	**0.0**	**(3.9)**	**322.1**	**308.8**
(0.3)	Project Enabling Fund: (to)/from balances	15.3	2.1	15.3	0.0	(13.9)	1.4	1.4
7.2	Total Local Authority Project Enabling Fund Contributions	**15.3**	**2.1**	**15.3**	**0.0**	**-13.9**	**1.4**	**1.4**
79.4	Defra contributions to self-funding projects	74.6	74.6	74.6	0.0	(12.8)	61.8	57.3
735.1	JAC contributions to self-funding projects	245.1	315.3	238.0	0.0	(194.0)	44.0	44.0
1,160.9	**Total Contributions**	**661.0**	**723.9**	**653.9**	**0.0**	**(211.8)**	**429.3**	**411.5**
2.5	Transfer (from)/to reserves	**0.0**	**2.7**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**10.6**	**(2.2)**	**(20.4)**
(2.5)	Total (surplus)/deficit for year	0.0	(2.7)				**2.2**	20.4
82.9	Reserves Brought Forward	82.9	85.4	88.1			88.1	85.9
2.5	Transfer (from)/to reserves	0.0	2.7	0.0			(2.2)	(20.4)
85.4	Reserves Carried Forward	82.9	88.1	88.1			85.9	65.5

HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SELF FUNDING PROJECTS REVISED FORECAST 2012/13 & DRAFT BUDGET 2013/14

	Budget 2012/13			Forecast 2012/13			Draft Budget 2013/14		
	Exp	Income	Net	Exp	Income	Net	Exp	Income	Net
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
1 Weald Meadows									
JAC expenditure	**4.5**			**7.5**			**0.0**		
Defra		0.0			0.0			0.0	
Local Authorities		(0.5)			0.0			0.0	
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund		0.0			0.0			0.0	
Other		(4.0)	**0.0**		(7.5)	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
2 Ancient Woodland Restoration Project									
JAC expenditure	**2.3**			**0.0**			**0.0**		
INTERREG		(1.1)			0.0			0.0	
Other		(1.1)			0.0			0.0	
JAC core contribution		0.0	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
3 Historic Settlements									
JAC expenditure	**4.6**			**3.6**			**3.0**		
Defra		0.0			(3.3)			0.0	
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund		0.0			0.0			0.0	
Other		(4.6)	**0.0**		(0.4)	**0.0**		(3.0)	**0.0**
4 Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Project									
JAC expenditure	**17.4**			**28.3**			**0.0**		
Defra		0.0			(5.0)			0.0	
Local Authorities		(12.8)			(19.8)			0.0	
Forestry Commission		(3.0)			(1.0)			0.0	
Other (including non-AONB NE contributions)		(1.6)	**0.0**		(2.5)	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
5 High Weald Heroes (Ashdown Forest)									
JAC expenditure	**2.8**			**2.3**			**0.0**		
Other (primarily Ashdown Forest Conservators)		(2.8)	**0.0**		(2.3)	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
6 High Weald Heroes (AONB wide)									
JAC expenditure	**25.7**			**16.2**			**0.0**		
Defra		0.0			(8.1)			0.0	
Heritage Lottery Fund		(12.9)			(8.1)			0.0	
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund		(12.9)			0.0			0.0	
Other (primarily charitable trusts)		0.0	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
7 Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Scheme - Implementation									
JAC expenditure	**108.8**			**220.5**			**0.0**		
Heritage Lottery Fund		(90.3)			(200.5)			0.0	
Local authoriries					0.0			0.0	
Defra		0.0			0.0			0.0	
Other		(18.5)	**0.0**		(20.0)	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
8 Protected Landscapes Joint Working									
JAC expenditure	**2.5**			**2.1**			**1.4**		
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund		(2.5)	**0.0**		(2.1)	**0.0**		(1.4)	**0.0**
9 Management Plan Review									
JAC expenditure	**2.2**			**3.6**			**5.4**		
Defra		(2.2)	**0.0**		(3.6)	**0.0**		(5.4)	**0.0**
10 Sustainable Development Fund									
JAC expenditure	**46.2**			**25.8**			**30.2**		
Defra		(46.2)			(25.8)			(30.2)	
Other		0.0	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**
11 Living Woods									
JAC expenditure	**31.8**			**31.8**			**36.1**		
Defra		(15.9)			(15.9)			(3.0)	
Heritage Lottery Fund		(15.9)			(15.9)			(18.0)	
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund		0.0			0.0			0.0	
Local Authorities		0.0			0.0			0.0	
Other		0.0	**(0.0)**		0.0	**0.0**		(15.0)	**0.0**
12 High Weald Heroes Phase II (in development)									
JAC expenditure	**13.6**			**0.0**			**20.1**		
Defra		(6.8)			0.0			(15.1)	
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund					0.0			0.0	
Local authorities		(6.8)	**0.0**		0.0	**0.0**		(5.0)	**0.0**
13 Battle and Brede Landscape Partnership Scheme (in development)									
JAC expenditure	**62.2**			**30.0**			**8.0**		
Defra		0.0			0.0			(8.0)	
Natural England		(5.7)			(30.0)			0.0	
Heritage Lottery Fund		(34.2)			0.0			0.0	
Environment Agency		(14.0)			0.0			0.0	
JAC Partnership Enabling Fund		(5.0)			0.0			0.0	
Other		(3.3)			0.0			0.0	
			0.0			**(0.0)**			**0.0**
14 Our Land									
JAC expenditure	**10.5**			**11.5**			**5.9**		
Defra via Surrey County Council		(10.5)			(11.5)			(5.9)	

			0.0			0.0			0.0
JAC expenditure (to Appendix A)	**335.0**	**(245.1)**		**383.2**	**(319.4)**		**110.1**	**(47.0)**	
Project Enabling fund expenditure (to Appendix A)		**(15.3)**			**(2.1)**			**(1.4)**	
Expenditure Funded by Defra (to Appendix A)		**(74.6)**			**(61.6)**			**(61.8)**	
TOTAL JAC expenditure/income	335.0	(335.0)	(0.0)	383.2	(383.2)	(0.0)	110.1	(110.1)	0.0

The table below summarises total project expenditure, including that incurred by partners which the JAC (ESCC) has, under contract, responsibility for monitoring and evidencing - in order to claim the full grant award from the external bodies supporting its self-financing projects.

Self Funding Projects including Partner Contributions

	Budget 2012/13			Forecast 2012/13			Draft Budget 2013/14		
	Exp	**Income**	**Net**	**Exp**	**Income**	**Net**	**Exp**	**Income**	**Net**
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Partner Expenditure									
Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Scheme - Implementation	5.2			14.1			0.0		
Sustainable Development Fund	11.0			11.0			0.0		
Total partner Expenditure	16.2			20.0			0.0		
JAC Expenditure	335.0			383.2			110.1		
TOTAL Project expenditure	**351.2**			**403.2**			**110.1**		
Local Partnership Contributions									
Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Scheme - Implementation		(5.2)			(14.1)			0.0	
Sustainable Development Fund		(11.0)			(11.0)			0.0	
Total Local Partner funding		(16.2)			(20.0)			0.0	
Total JAC funding		(335.0)			(383.2)			(110.1)	
Total Project funding		**(351.2)**	**0.0**		**(403.2)**	**0.0**		**(110.1)**	**0.0**

Eye Spy (High Weald Heroes Phase II)
5177155

							5177155	5177155
Eye Spy (High Weald Heroes Phase II)	**Year 1 JAC Budget 2013-2014**	**Year 2 JAC Budget 2014-2015**	**Year 3 JAC Budget 2015-2016**	**Total Contributions Requested**	**Total Contributions Committed**	**Total Actuals 2012-2013**	**SAP Actuals 2012-2013**	**SAP Commitments 212-2013**
Expenditure								
Pay:								
Basic Pay 0.4 FTE	£11,360.00	£11,360.00	£11,360.00			0	0	0
NI	£831.55	£830.00	£830.00			0	0	0
Pension	£2,283.36	£2,285.00	£2,285.00			0	0	0
Travel	240	£240.00	£240.00			0	0	0
Non-Pay:								
Operational Budget	5410.09	£4,310.00	£6,585.00			0	0	0
						0	0	0
						0	0	0
Total Expenditure	**£20,125.00**	**£19,025.00**	**£21,300.00**			**0**	**0**	**0**
Income								
Contributions grant aid:								
Defra	-£ 15,100.00	-£ 15,100.00	-£ 15,100.00	-£ 45,300.00	-£ 45,300.00		0	0
Heritage Lottery Fund	£ -							
Contributions other:							0	0
Wealden DC	-£ 1,200.00	-£ 1,200.00	-£ 1,200.00	-£ 3,600.00	-£ 3,600.00	-£ 4,900.00	-4,900	0
East Sussex CC	-£ 1,200.00	-£ 1,200.00	-£ 1,200.00	-£ 3,600.00	-£ 2,000.00	£ -	0	0
Kent CC	£ -	£ -	-£ 500.00	-£ 1,000.00	-	£ -	0	0
WSCC	-£ 275.00	-£ 275.00	-£ 275.00	-£ 825.00	-£ 275.00	£ -	0	0
Surrey CC	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 225.00	-£ 75.00	£ -	0	0
Rother DC	-£ 1,100.00	£ -	-£ 1,100.00	-£ 3,300.00	-£ 1,100.00	£ -	0	0
Mid Sussex DC	-£ 450.00	-£ 450.00	-£ 450.00	-£ 1,350.00	-£ 450.00	£ -	0	0
Tunbridge Wells BC	£ -	£ -	-£ 600.00	-£ 1,200.00	-	£ -	0	0
Horsham DC	-£ 100.00	-£ 100.00	-£ 100.00	-£ 300.00	-£ 100.00	£ -	0	0
Sevenoaks DC	-£ 200.00	-£ 200.00	-£ 200.00	-£ 600.00	-£ 200.00	£ -	0	0
Ashford BC	-£ 200.00	-£ 200.00	-£ 200.00	-£ 600.00	-£ 200.00	£ -	0	0
Hastings BC	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 225.00	-£ 75.00	£ -	0	0
Tandridge DC	£ -	£ -	-£ 75.00	-£ 150.00	-	£ -	0	0
Crawley BC	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 225.00	-£ 75.00	£ -	0	0
Tonbridge & Malling BC	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	-£ 225.00	-£ 75.00	£ -	0	0
							0	0
							0	0
Total Income	**-£ 20,125.00**	**-£ 19,025.00**	**-£ 21,300.00**	**-£ 62,725.00**	**-£ 53,525.00**	**-£ 4,900.00**	**-£ 4,900.00**	**£ -**
Total nett budget	**£ 0.00**	**£ -**	**£ -**	**-£ 62,725.00**	**-£ 53,525.00**	**-£ 4,900.00**	**-£ 4,900.00**	**£ -**
				Variance	**-£ 9,200.00**	**SAP Totals**	**-4,900.00**	**0.00**
						Check	**TRUE**	**TRUE**

Notes

1. Indicative costs are less than those set out in the High Weald Heroes paper to the JAC in November 2011 to enable a balanced budget to be achieved.
2. The indicative budget assumes an 0.4FTE post for delivery appointed at the bottom of SO2 with annual increments.
3. NI and pensions have been assumed at 27%.
4. Training allowance is based on the JAC annual per person for training of £400 pro rata.
5. The project budget allows for Welly Walk leaflet production, school plaques and education events.
6. The budget assumed that a contribution from Defra of approximately 75% can be maintained.
7. Local authority contributions are based on a formula guided by the % of county/district in the AONB.

Agenda Item 9

Committee: **High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee**

Date: **25 March 2013**

Title of Report: **High Weald AONB Management Plan Review 2014**

By: **AONB Director**

Purpose: **To provide an update on the review process; and approve the draft plan for consultation purposes**

RECOMMENDATIONS
The Joint Advisory Committee - JAC - is recommended to:

1. **Approve the consultation draft of the management plan and agree to proceed with the public consultation**;
2. Note the Plan's supporting documents including the Performance Monitoring Report; Condition Monitoring Report; Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The AONB Management Plan is a 20 year strategy first published in 2004. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, all AONB management plans are subject to a 5 yearly review. The scope of the review was discussed by the JAC in March and November 2011 and a light touch approach agreed. Natural England was, as required, formally notified of the decision to revise the Plan and the agreed timetable. At its last meeting on 14th November 2012 the JAC approved the ongoing revisions to the introductory section of the plan and the progress made towards preparing a consultation draft, in line with the timetable previously agreed.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

2.1 Technical input on current issues and revised 2019 targets was sought over the autumn 2012 period with over 70 individuals contacted and 5 informal discussions held. Individuals were chosen from AONB Unit contacts based on their expertise relevant to the individual components of natural beauty and geographical coverage. The responses have informed amendments to the plans Objectives, Indicator of Success and Targets. The rest of the plan has been updated and revised (the facts and figures section will be added later along with a report of the consultation process and glossary).

2.2 The revisions were circulated to OSG members in early February to allow for internal consultation within local authority partners prior to the OSG meeting on 25th February 2013. The revised draft was further discussed and proposed changes agreed by the OSG at their meeting. Final comments and amendments were invited by the 6th March and all comments have been incorporated and amended where appropriate. The OSG has worked very hard to achieve these deadlines and the JAC is asked to note their efforts. The OSG agreed draft was discussed at the Management Board on 23rd October.

2.3 In undertaking the review certain processes need to be followed to meet the statutory requirements. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment are being developed and have been shared with OSG members. A Performance Monitoring Report has been produced to track achievements against Plan targets, and an AONB Condition Assessment has been carried out to provide information on the state of AONB features and the threats they face, to inform the review process.

2.4 A plan for public consultation is being prepared by the AONB Unit and will be shared with the OSG and JAC Chairman for agreement in April. With the decision to drop publication of the AONB newspaper the 'Anvil', which was delivered to every household in the AONB, due to budget cuts alternative methods of distributing the draft Plan and seeking public comment are being investigated. Currently the following activities are being proposed:

- Formal letters to all local authority partners and relevant public bodies
- Promote to residents via local authority citizen panels, newsletters and websites
- Direct to parish councils and via parish council newsletters
- Email alerts to all AONB contacts including all landowners on the land management project databases (approx 70% of farmers with farm based addresses).
- Information at libraries and other public places
- Promotion at events in the area during the consultation period
- Web based marketing to wider contacts with selected key messages sent out through social media such as facebook and twitter.

2.5 If JAC members would like a further opportunity as a group to discuss in more detail the proposed changes to Management Plan targets members may like to utilise the June Management Board meeting, add an additional session and extending an invitation to all JAC members.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The Management Plan has now been through the technical review and amendment stage and the revised text has been checked and amended by constituent local authorities through the OSG. JAC are now asked to formally approve the consultation draft. This draft text will then be used for the consultation phase as detailed in the consultation plan. This will take place over the spring/summer (see timetable below at Appendix 1) with changes resulting from the consultation being made prior to the final plan being returned to the JAC for final approval in the Autumn, followed by adoption within local authorities prior to the adoption deadline in March 2014.

Supporting documents:
AONB Management Plan Consultation Draft approved by OSG
Performance Monitoring Report;
Condition Monitoring Report;
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Appropriate Assessment

Contact: s.marsh@highweald.org

APPENDIX 1: Management Plan review timetable:
Agreed by the JAC March 2012

Management Plan review timetable			
Mar-12			
Apr-12		scoping review	
May-12			
Jun-12	X	Review scoping approved by MB	
Jul-12			
Aug-12		Issues & options, and plan monitoring	Performance monitoring report
Sep-12			Condition monitoring report
Oct-12	X	progress report to JAC	
Nov-12			
Dec-12		plan redrafted	
Jan-13			
Feb-13			SEA and AA reports
Mar-13	X	Consultation Draft approved	
Apr-13			
May-13		plan consultation	
Jun-13			
Jul-13			
Aug-13		amendments & modifications	
Sep-13			
Oct-13	X	final draft agreed	
Nov-13			
Dec-13			
Jan-14		LA cttee processes	
Feb-14			
Mar-14			
Apr-14		Adoption	

Appendix 2

Consultation Draft of the Management Plan – previously circulated

Agenda Item No. 11

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 25 March 2013

Title of Report: High Weald AONB Unit - Staff

By: High Weald AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to note the report.

1.0 TEMPORARY RESEARCH OFFICER

1.1 Charles Winchester has been recruited on a five month contract to provide support for the High Weald management plan review and to the AONB Unit's research and data work programme.

1.2 Charles, a graduate from the University of Oxford and recently back from studying in the US, has lived and worked on his family's High Weald farm since childhood.

2.0 VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENT PLACEMENTS

2.1 Members will be aware that the High Weald AONB Unit welcomes interest from anyone who would like to volunteer their skills and experience to benefit the AONB. The AONB Unit has a good track record attracting volunteers to undertake a variety of work that the AONB Unit staff are unable to do due to constraints on time and/or financial resources.

2.2 Currently the AONB Unit is particularly fortunate to have secured volunteer assistance, expertise and guidance from:

- Dr Bill Vorley, Principal Researcher of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) worked with the AONB Unit on a five week sabbatical programme run by IIED. Dr Vorley has written a very well received report investigating how best to secure the future of livestock farming in the High Weald AONB following a series of interviews with farmers, farm managers, land agents, farm advisors and consultants, retailers, statutory bodies and researchers.

- Michael Satchwell, a student at Hadlow Agricultural College studying Countryside Management, is currently on a six month placement with the AONB Unit. Although Michael will assist the Unit and gain experience across the range of the Unit's remit as a geologist he is well qualified to focus on increasing the understanding of the High Weald's rich geological heritage.

- Eugenie van Heijgen is a Dutch student studying for two Masters degrees (Landscape Architecture and Planning at the University of Wageningen and Landscape History at the University of Groningen) with a particular interest in the relationship people have with their local landscapes. In partial fulfilment of her Masters, Eugenie is currently on a full-time internship for four months with the High Weald AONB Unit and, as part of the AONB management plan review, is providing advice on how best to 'improve the understanding of peoples' experience of, and aspirations for, the High Weald landscape.'

- Andrew Warren-Payne, a Senior Research Analyst at the international digital marketing company Econsultancy, has volunteered some of his time to provide the AONB Unit with a marketing communications plan and suggest a publicity campaign to help meet the AONB management plan's objectives to improve public understanding and enjoyment of the High Weald. In view of the continuing difficulties facing the economy and the inevitable implications this has for the work of the AONB Unit, this extraordinarily generous offer has been warmly welcomed as its findings could both alleviate the consequences of reduced financial and personnel resources and still reach a good proportion of the 'target' audiences.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are asked to: note the report; thank Dr Vorley and the IEED and Andrew Warren-Payne and Econsultancy for offering their time and expertize; and welcome Michael Satchwell, Eugenie van Heijgen, and Charles Winchester to the AONB Unit.

Contact: JD Lavender AONB Co-Director, j.lavender@highweald.org

Agenda Item No. 12

Committee:	**High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee**
Date:	**25 March 2013**
Title of Report:	**Risk Management**
By:	**AONB Director**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the report and;

2. Request that the Management Board meet to review significant risks as required and develop options for their management.

Supporting Information

1. 0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Members will recall that as part of the process of producing the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee's annual external accounts ten control objectives are assessed. One of the control objectives is:

- Significant risks to achieving High Weald objectives are recorded and assessed and the adequacy of arrangements reviewed.

1.2 The key risks to the Joint Advisory Committee are set out in Appendix A.

1.3 Given that the Joint Advisory Committee's work is reliant on partnership contributions and the need to successfully raise external funding, the cause of the most significant risks is financial.

1.4 For the year 2013/14, a reduction of 5.4% in the Defra contribution required financial cuts to be made to address the arising budget deficit.

1.5 These cuts were achieved by a planned reduction in the JAC's core Sustainable Development Fund and project budgets.

1.6 In 2012/13 the impact of these cuts was mitigated both through the work of the self-financing projects, whose project officers all undertake communication activities and by the partial re-direction of the AONB Business Manager's time to developing and managing communication projects where funds were available.

2.0 KEY RISKS 2013/14 AND BEYOND

2.1 Further reductions in financial contributions by the JAC partnership towards the JAC's core business will mean that the JAC will be unable to maintain the current level of work under the Business Strategy 2010/14 headings, which are:

- Preparing, monitoring and reviewing the AONB Management Plan
- Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan by individuals and communities
- Providing advice and guidance to partners on CroW, Section 85
- Adding value to our partners' wider landscape and environmental objectives within the AONB
- Enabling the JAC to be an effective champion for the High Weald.

2.2 As a consequence, the key risks to note are:

- From April 2013 AONB Unit staff will undertake the JAC's clerk service (to date provided in turn by West Sussex and East Sussex County Councils) and this may result in a more informal service to the JAC.
- A reduced budget for the JAC's accommodation and running costs will result in the JAC being unable to maintain its computer systems to capitalise on developments in Information Technology. This may result in less efficient ways of working.
- That a reduced budget for communications gives the JAC little or no capacity to develop information and interpretation projects.
- A reduced staff budget gives the JAC no capacity to recruit consultants to undertake the work formerly undertaken by the lost Finance Officer and Interpretation Officer posts. Existing staff will therefore have to continue to accommodate the essential work of these posts within their own work programmes.
- Many self-financing projects came to an end in 2012/13. There will therefore be limited scope in subsequent years for project activity to fill work gaps left by a reduced core budget.
- Without the 'local' match funding provided by local authorities for AONB-wide projects through the Project Enabling Fund and area-specific contributions it will be difficult to secure external funding from grant-aiding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund for new self-financing projects.

2.3 A risk assessment of reducing activity under each business strategy heading will be undertaken in 2013/14 to identify priorities and make further decisions on financial, staff and other resource allocation. Such an assessment will need to consider whether there is scope to mitigate the risks.

2.4 Funding uncertainty means that it is hard to forecast the number or scale of self-financing projects during and beyond 2013/14. This makes it harder to plan the allocation of core resources between core functions.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Risk management systems in line with East Sussex County Council policy are in place.

3.2 During 2011/12 and 2012/13, the impact of reduced financial contributions to the JAC core work was mitigated through the work of the JAC's self-financing projects and by increasing the work and remit of existing AONB Unit staff.

3.3 From 2013/14 the impact of reducing contributions to core work will be greater and there will be a limited scope during the year and subsequent years for making further financial cuts without either making radical changes to the JAC's operations or by using the JAC's reserves.

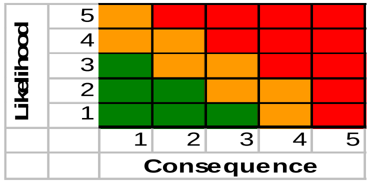
3.4 During 2013/14, the JAC will need to prioritise core functions so that a direction for making further decisions about resource allocation from 2014/15 onwards can be set.

Contact: JD Lavender Co-Director j.lavender@highweald.org

High Weald JAC - Key Risks 25.03.13
Sponsor: Sally Marsh/Jason Lavender
Author: Jason Lavender
Date: April 2013- March 2014

Risk Log

Likelihood Ranking	1 = Improbable (<10%); 2 = Unlikely (10-30%); 3 = Less than Likely (30-50%); 4 = More than Likely (50-80%); 5 = Probable (>80%)
Consequence Ranking	1 = Minor; 2 = Moderate; 3 = Significant; 4 = Substantial; 5 = Grave



Control Rating	
1. Excessive	Controls exceed the level required to manage the risk
2. Optimal	Controls are comprehensive & commensurate with the risk. All controls are working as intended.
3. Adequate	Some shortfall in level of controls but these do not materially affect the level of residual risk.
4. Inadequate	Weaknesses & inefficiency in controls do not treat the risk as intended.

Risk no	Risk What can go wrong	Root Causes How it can go wrong	Owner	Inherent Risk			Controls / Mitigating Actions Preventative & reactive control measures	Control Owner	Control Rating	Residual Risk		
	Format: EVENT leading to CONSEQUENCE resulting in EFFECT ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES			Likelihood	Consequence	Matrix Zone	Format: What action; How frequent			Likelihood	Consequence	Matrix Zone
1	Reduced activity/service due to reducing budgets 2013/14 and beyond. JAC with a reducing profile as a champion for the High Weald. Less proactive work to enable public understanding, management and enjoyment of the AONB.	Public sector spending cuts to Defra and local authorities leading to a further reduction in the JAC's budget.	AONB Director	4	5	Red	Unit direction to take into account direction of government and local authorities. JAC members and officers involved in and supportive of partnership and able to lobby internally for funds. JAC Chairman on behalf of partnership to lobby for maintaining contributions. Alternative sources of core income sought. Options to reduce costs e.g. accommodation without adversely affecting on service explored. Planned reduction in scope of JAC's work programme.	AONB Director	2	4	5	Red

2	Unit unable to attract external funding for delivery of projects that meet AONB Management Plan Objectives	Public sector cuts resulting in difficulties securing funds to match external grants such as those from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Without commitment from 'local' partners bids for external funds not feasible/weak. Unit objectives do not align with grant-aiding bodies objectives. Competition. Target audiences for grant-aiding bodies do not exist within the High Weald.	AONB Director	4	5	Red	Local authorities requested to consider identifying funds to ensure local matched funds can be used to attract external funds and allow partnership projects to be developed. Clear understanding of grant-aiding bodies objectives developed. Unit direction to take into account direction of grant-aiding bodies. Fundraising expertise within the Unit developed and maintained. Alternative fundraising options explored.	AONB Director	4	3	4	Red
3	IT needs not met, Unit unable to work efficiently and undertake research activity, fewer outputs, direction of JAC work programme compromised	Poor links to computer network/server results in slow machine operation, inability to download GIS data, update website etc.	AONB Director	3	3	Green	Technical advice sought and recommendations/solutions implemented.	AONB Director	3	3	3	Green
4	Loss of grant aid due to self-financing project outputs not being met	Project staff seeking and securing new jobs as contract end date approaches. Project objectives not completed, undue workload on AONB core staff to complete. Adverse affect to the AONB core work remit and capacity and time to raise funds to support core work.	AONB Director	4	4	Amber	Support and funding secured for retention bonuses. Longer notice periods for project staff. Projects developed and managed to ensure that the delivery of key/complex outputs are not planned for the end of the contract. Flexibility built into core staff work programmes in order that their is capacity to 'finish' self-financing projects if required.	AONB Director	3	3	4	Red
5	AONB advice given by Unit staff not up to date and opportunities missed to ensure AONBs remain at the forefront of national policy	A rapidly changing external policy environment in terms of planning and land use policy impacting on the AONB	AONB Director	3	4	Amber	Liaison with SEPL colleagues in the region, NAAONB and local authority colleagues to share information. In the short term scrutinize national policy and consider and examine potential future issues, opportunities and developments.	AONB Director	3	2	3	Green
6	Future possibility that what is being delivered by the AONB Partnership is not valued by Defra due to the loss of the dedicated Landscape Policy Unit within Defra. Cabinet re-shuffle resulting in the loss of supportive Defra Minister.	Total loss or severe reduction of national government funding and commitment to AONB Partnerships	AONB Director	4	5	Red	Continued and concerted engagement with Defra and Natural England and ongoing liaison with and reporting on NAAONB/ SEEPL work programmes. Active engagement with Defra Ministers directly and in conjunction with NAAONB and SEEPL.	AONB Director	2	4	5	Red

Press release | Main Sponsor

Three of the best are unveiled ahead of Taste of Kent Awards dinner

The three top names in each of the Taste of Kent Awards categories, which have the full media support of *insideKENT*, have been revealed ahead of the glittering awards dinner at the Mercure Great Danes Hotel, Hollingbourne this month, on **Friday 8 March 2013**.

The Produced in Kent inspired awards attracted almost 14,500 votes from the general public, in the first round of voting, which amounted to an impressive 26% increase as consumers were keen to nominate Kent's food and drink heroes. Voting in four of the categories proved so vibrant that the increase in the public vote rose by over 50% in 'Kent Butcher or Meat Producer of the Year', 'Best Kentish Cider or Perry', 'Best Kentish Wine' and 'Best Fishmonger of the Year'.

Edwyn Martyn Manager of Produced in Kent, the organisation behind the Taste of Kent Awards said: "Whilst we all might be tightening our financial belts in 2013, eating and drinking locally produced food and drink and enjoying quality food retail and dining out experiences in Kent remains a top priority in our county. It's clear from the leap in votes that consumers are putting our food and drink heroes at the top of the menu and want to see their excellence rewarded via the prestigious Taste of Kent Awards. The awards have been made possible by the overall sponsorship of Vertex Law, together with the backing of 15 other category sponsors and we would like to thank them all for their tremendous support."

Comment [SD1]: Vertex Law statement to be inserted here

In addition to Vertex Law, first time sponsorship from Shopper Anonymous, BTF Partnership and Chapmans of Sevenoaks, adds to a loyal list of Taste of Kent Awards backers that include Biddenden Vineyards, Chapel Down Winery, Hadlow College, Kent County Council, Kent Life, kff (Kent Frozen Foods), NFU Mutual, Opies, sff (Stephen's Fresh Foods), Wilkins Kennedy, Shepherd Neame and Visit Kent. The Taste of Kent Awards is also delighted to have the media support of ourselves, insideKENT, as well as BBC Radio Kent and Archant KOS Media.

The 2013 awards have seen a number of food and drink businesses making the top three in their award categories for the first time. These include The Globe & Rainbow in Kilndown in the Opies sponsored 'Kent Dining Pub of the Year', Canterbury-based Wantsum Brewery with its Dynamo brew in the 'Best Kentish Beer', Farmer Palmer from Egerton in the sff (Stephens Fresh Foods) sponsored 'Kent Butcher or Meat producer of the Year', Little Stour Orchard of Margate in the Kent County Council sponsored 'Best Kent Juice Producer' and Thackeray's in the Visit Kent sponsored category 'Kent Restaurant of the Year'.

It could also be two years in a row for four of 2012's winners with Biddenden Vineyards, Chapel Down, Mama Feelgoods and Ramsgate Brewery all in contention for a 2013 award; whilst previous winner Cliftonville in the Hadlow College sponsored 'Kent Farmers' Market of the Year' going head to head with new finalists, Tonbridge and Elm Court.

In the five self-nominating Kent Food Product Category Awards, entries are well up on 2012 which kept the tasting panels very busy during the judging. Finally the 'Kent Food, Farming and Landscape Award' introduced for the first time in 2012 makes a popular return with the High Weald AONB and Kent Downs AONB sponsored award set to reward the exemplary achievements of food producers or farmers who make real contributions to the conservation and enhancement of Kent's fine landscapes. The entries demonstrated variety and innovation amongst farmers in the county and represented a diverse range of farming types in the AONBs. The finalists include a vineyard and sheep farming in differing landscapes; a cheesemaker and organic fruit juice production; and a mixed farm business that includes B&B and is working to traditionally manage a special part of the Kent Downs.

Nick Johannsen, director of Kent Downs AONB, said: “All these entries demonstrate how a rich diversity of farming makes the landscape in Kent what it is today. It is the innovation of individuals who continue to develop and market new products that will help to secure the future of farming and the character of the landscape across the ‘Garden of England’ and ensure that Kent continues to be celebrated for its high quality produce.”

The judges have now completed their visits to Great Broxhall Farm, at Pett Bottom; Meopham Valley Vineyard; Moor Organics in Teynham, near Sittingbourne; Seasalter Lamb in Eastling, Faversham; Winterdale Cheesemakers, at Fairseat near Wrotham; and Woodside Farm in Benenden and the winner will be revealed, together with all the other Taste of Kent Award winners, at the glittering awards dinner this month.

NEXT ISSUE: Check out the next issue of insideKENT for a full pictorial review of all the winners and the awards evening

(Donna - table of shortlisted finalists)

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