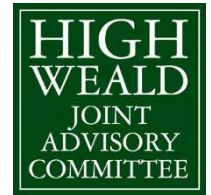


High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee



Agenda

Wednesday 16 November at 10.30am

Holy Cross Priory, Lewes Road, Cross-in-Hand, Heathfield, TN21 0DZ

1. Using Medieval Field Information in Planning
To consider a presentation by the Sally Marsh, AONB Co-Director on the use of the fields systems research in planning.
2. Apologies
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Minutes of the JAC meeting
To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the JAC held on 23 March 2016 (page 3)
6. Minutes of the Management Board Meeting
To note the matters arising from the Management Board meeting held on 12 October 2016 (page 9)
7. Minutes of the Officer Steering Group
To note the minutes of the Officer Steering Group meeting held on 28 September 2016 (page 15)
8. Revenue Budget 2016/2017
To consider a report by the Treasurer (page 21). Core Budget and Self-funding Projects Budget attached as appendices.
9. AONB Planning Advice
To consider a report by the Planning Advisor on Advice Notes (page 26). Legislation and Planning Policy Advice Note, High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template and excerpts from National Planning Policy Framework attached as appendices.
10. Management Plan Review Timetable 2017-2019
To consider a report by the AONB Co-Director on the Management Plan Review Schedule 2017-2019 (page 28)
11. Work Plan update
To consider a report by the AONB Co-Director on the Unit's work programme (page 30) with a presentation by the Landscape Advisor on Historic Routeways

12. High Weald AONB Sign Guidance

To consider a report by the Landscape Advisor on AONB signs (page 35). AONB Sign Guidance attached as an appendix.

13. Risk Management and Staffing

To consider a report by the AONB Co-Director (page 37). Risk Log attached as an appendix.

14. Any other business

Next Joint Advisory Committee Meeting - confirmed as 29 March 2017.

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

Samantha Nicholas

Clerk to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Woodland Enterprise Centre, Flimwell, East Sussex TN5 7PR
E: s.nicholas@highweald.org; T: 01424 723011

High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee



Minutes of meeting

23 March 2016 at 10.30am

East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead, RH19 3LT

Members present:

Mrs J Davison	Sevenoaks District Council, Chairman
Cllr B Kentfield	Rother District Council, Deputy Chairman
Cllr Mrs S Tidy	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Mrs L Dunbar	Tandridge District Council
Cllr Mrs J Soyke	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Cllr Mrs R Moore	Wealden District Council
Cllr M Balfour	Kent County Council
Cllr L Dunbar	Tandridge District Council
Cllr B Acraman	West Sussex County Council

Officers present:

Mr T Alty	Finance Manager, East Sussex County Council
Mr D Greenwood	Team Leader, Countryside Funding and Marketing , Surrey County Council
Ms G Sherwin	AONB Business Manager, High Weald AONB Unit
Mr M Pitts	AONB Outreach Officer, High Weald AONB Unit
Mrs T Taylor	AONB Land Management Adviser, High Weald AONB Unit
Mr C Winchester	AONB Landscape Adviser, High Weald AONB Unit
Mr D Marlow	OSG Chairman, Rother District Council
Mr T Dyer	Team Manager, Environment and Heritage, West Sussex County Council

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from the following Members and officers:

Councillor C Hersey, Councillor M Sydney, Councillor A Pickering, Councillor R Street, Councillor H Rogers, Mrs Alison Field, Mrs V Pullen, Mrs H French, Mr J Seymour , Mrs J Hollingum, Mr D Scully, Mr J Lavender, Mrs S Marsh, Mrs J Hollingum.

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

2.1 It was noted that there were no declarations of interest raised by the Members.

3. URGENT MATTERS

3.1 It was noted that no urgent matters were raised by the Members.

4. MINUTES OF THE JAC MEETING – 6 November 2016

4.1 Apologies were given for not including David Marlow on the attendance list for the meeting held on 6 November and it was agreed that the minutes would be updated accordingly.

4.2 RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting of 6 November 2016 as a correct record.

5. **MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD – 2 March 2016**

5.1 RESOLVED to note the minutes of the Management Board held on 2 March 2016 as a correct record.

6. **MINUTES OF THE OFFICER STEERING GROUP – 10 February 2016**

6.1 The Committee considered a verbal report on the Officer Steering Group (OSG) by the OSG Chairman, David Marlow.

6.2 David Marlow informed the Committee that the OSG has produced a Planning Briefing Paper. The Paper was based on a report comparing the local authority planning policies across the AONB which had been produced by Natalie Bumpus, Wealden DC, on behalf of the OSG. The Paper has been produced to assist Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in fulfilling their duties to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. The Paper has been approved by the Management Board and will be sent to the Heads of Planning for circulation within the local authorities.

6.4 David Marlow, on behalf of the OSG, also confirmed that they will produce a summarised version of the Planning Briefing Paper for Members who attend planning committees.

6.3 RESOLVED to note:

(1) the Minutes of the Officer Steering Group held on 10 February 2016 as a correct record.

(2) the Planning Briefing Paper, and to send the Briefing Paper with a covering letter to the appropriate Heads of Planning within the AONB Local Authorities.7.0.

REVENUE BUDGET 2016/2017

7.1 The Committee considered a report by Finance Manager, Thomas Alty, who presented the Revenue Budget for 2016/17.

7.2 The Defra contribution for 2016/17 was forecast to reduce by £12,800. However, since the budget was approved for consultation, Defra have confirmed an inflationary increase of £4,400 bringing the 2016/17 contribution to £260,000. The additional contribution has been allocated to projects.

7.3 The local authorities have confirmed contribution towards the core budget with the exception of Kent County Council which has provisionally approved their contribution, totalling £10,000, subject to formal approval of the budget.

7.4 JAC expenditure on self-funding projects is estimated to be £150,200 in 2016/17. It is proposed to allocate £56,000 from the Defra 'single pot' to projects. The project budget

reflects that current projects are more modest in scale with development and delivery dependent on core, not project staff.

- 7.5 The increased Defra contribution of £17,800 over the 4 year period will help to meet the core budget deficit forecast for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
- 7.6 It was confirmed that although Defra no longer contributes up to 75% of redundancy payments, the reserves have been built up to £104,400, and in the worst case scenario will cover all staff redundancies.
- 7.7 It was reflected that the positive outcome in the current budget allocation was due to the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty campaigning on behalf of the AONBs and Rory Stewart MP's support for AONBs and National Parks.
- 7.3 RESOLVED to note the report and:
- (1) approve the Revenue Budget for 2016/17.
- (2) thank the local authorities and Defra for their contributions towards core costs and High Weald Heroes.

8. LAND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME (LEP)

- 8.1 The JAC considered a report by Gerry Sherwin, High Weald Business Manager, on the Landscape Enhancement Programme and a presentation from Matthew Pitts and Tamara Taylor on the Programme's progress.
- 8.2 Gerry Sherwin informed the Committee of the background to developing the LEP. The Unit have been very successful in the past in securing project funding through Heritage Lottery Funds but this area has become excessively competitive. Many of the past land management schemes have been habitat-specific such as Living Woods and the Weald Meadows Initiative, however the new approach will advise on all habitats that require restoration. There are now many grants which are becoming available to landowners such as the Water Catchment Partnerships, National Grid and Countryside Stewardship which are not easy to access. To maximise the opportunity for landowners to access the grants and deliver management plan objectives, two officers have been appointed. Matt Pitts, who previously managed the Living Woods project, is now the Outreach Officer (0.8FTE), and Tamara Taylor (0.4FTE), who has worked in agricultural sector for many years with Natural England and National Trust, has been recruited as a Land Management Adviser.
- 8.3 Cllr Brian Kentfield enquired whether the Unit could ask for contributions from the landowners. Gerry Sherwin informed the Committee that the grant applications could include costs for managing project implementation but not for the initial development of projects though the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund, as an exception, could specifically fund project development.

- 8.4 Matt Pitts and Tamara Taylor took the Committee through a presentation of the Landscape Enhancement Programme's delivery to date. Presentation appended.
- a. The presentation covered the opportunities to improve a wide range of habitats by accessing various grant schemes which can tackle issues such as: over grazing; poor quality infrastructure; rights of way access; degraded hedgerows; and river restoration to improve water quality and flow.
 - b. Many of the new funding programmes give greater flexibility and opportunities for the Unit to fill the gaps that will support landowners to benefit from the schemes. The Unit has taken a targeted approach through GIS mapping to show existing stewardship schemes. This has been followed up by ground surveying the areas that are not currently under Countryside Stewardship and building relationships with the local landowners.
 - c. The Unit have put in a bid to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund (CSFF) which allocates funds to service providers with environmental land management experience to support land managers to improve the natural environment. The Rother & Dudwell area has been selected and 23 landowners with 3,000 conjoined hectares have signed up to the scheme, 1000 hectares over the minimum requirements for this Fund.
 - d. The National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative has led to the Unit identifying 35 km of hedgerow restoration in the project area with an estimated cost of £450,000.
 - e. Sussex Lund, managed by the Sussex Community Foundation, was launched at the beginning of March and applications are required by 15 April 2016. The Fund has been opened up to the all parishes in the AONB. The LEP is enabling several projects to apply such as Stonegate Primary School, Wadhurst Parish, Crowborough Town Council and Tablehurst Farm in West Sussex.
 - f. The Committee was informed of two projects which have been initiated through the LEP. The Red Barn Field project in Sedlescombe has an under-managed species-rich meadow. The Parish Council, through the LEP, now has a Management Plan and initiated a grazing scheme to install secure fencing. Keith Datchler of the High Weald Landscape Trust has carried out emergency hay cutting and the fencing will be installed in the next month. The adjacent farmer will support the grazing programme. The meadow is used by the community and will act as a seed bank for future meadows.
 - g. The Rother and Romney Water Catchment Partnership have allocated funding to manage the removal of barriers such as the box culvert at Doleham Ditch, a tributary of the Rother. The Unit is working in partnership with the landowner, the Internal Drainage Board, the Environment Agency and Wild Trout Trust to improve the flow of the river which will impact on species such as wild trout.
- 8.5 The Members agreed that engagement with landowners from the officers was invaluable. This facilitation was essential as many landowners struggle to cope with the Stewardship Scheme paperwork. This will also encourage landowners to improve infrastructure and

encourage positive grazing schemes. Cllr Mrs Moore offered to participate in the scheme to see how accessible they are to small- scale farmers.

- 8.6 There was a discussion around invasive species, highlighting the lack of continuity of management to eradicate certain species such as Himalayan Balsam, and the risks of tuberculosis spread in the Weald's cattle through increasing badger populations.
- 8.7 The LEADER Programme was also discussed and the Unit advised that there may be scope for other grant funds, such as Sussex Lund, to support projects being submitted to the LEADER programmes that were not scoring highly against its criteria, for example jobs generated, with other grant funds such as Sussex Lund which may be more appropriate.
- 8.8 RESOLVED to note the report and for the project funding to be allocated to Landscape Enhancement Programme.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- 9.1 The JAC considered a report and presentation from Charles Winchester, Landscape Adviser, on the background to the Neighbourhood Planning guidance. Presentation appended.
- a) It was presented to the Committee that neighbourhood planning was introduced in the Localism Act in 2011, and has the potential to significantly affect the location and appearance of future development across the AONB. In the past few months there has been significant increase in parishes requesting data. The Unit holds a large amount of Geographic Information System character components which can be shared with a wider audience.
 - b) The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) data shows there is a significant increase in the number of parishes producing a neighbourhood plan. The AONB has seen an increase across East Sussex and Kent with the greatest concentration in Mid-Sussex.
 - c) The Unit, with the support of the Officer Steering Group, have developed guidance and metadata to upload on the website for each of the 99 parishes.
- 9.2 The Committee discussed the cost of producing a neighbourhood plan. The initial cost analysis of £15,000 tends to be very different to the reality, up to £35,000 in some cases. Cllr Mrs Davison informed the Committee that it was possible to get funding to support the development of neighbourhood plans.
- 9.3 The Unit explained that due to IT issues the uploading of the data onto the AONB website was taking longer than expected. Cllr Mrs Moore urged the Unit to have the information available as soon as possible as the data was also useful in a wider context. David Marlow agreed that availability of components data would create great awareness of the AONB.
- 9.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The JAC considered a report by Jason Lavender on risk management and the associated risk management matrix.
- 10.2 Gerry Sherwin informed the Committee, on behalf of Jason Lavender, that although Defra had offered secure funding until 2019 they could not be complacent and were looking for future funding options.
- 10.3 The greatest risk at present was highlighted as not having skilled staff in place. The Planning Officer position has now been filled. Claire Tester will start with the Unit in June 2016. The Unit are also planning to recruit a part-time, Communication Officer.
- 10.4 Resolved to note the report and;

(1) request that the Management Board continue to meet to review significant risks as required and develop options for their management.

11. AOB

- 11.1 There will be a June Management Board Meeting and the next JAC meeting is to be held in November 2016. A doodle poll will be sent to the Committee.

High Weald Management Board



Minutes of meeting 12 October 2016 at 10am

Acorn Tourism, Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, TN5 7PR

Samantha Nicholas
Clerk to the High Weald AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

Present: Members:

Mrs J Davison	Sevenoaks District Council (Chairman)
Cllr B Kentfield	Rother District Council (Vice-chairman)
Cllr C Hersey	Mid Sussex District Council
Cllr Mrs S Tidy	East Sussex County Council

Also Present:

Sally Marsh	AONB Director (job share)
Jason Lavender	AONB Director (job share)
Gerry Sherwin	AONB Business Manager

Apologies

1. The following persons gave their apologies for absence:
Cllr B Acraman; Cllr R Moore; Cllr M Sydney; David Marlow; Cllr M Balfour

Members' Interests

2. There were no declarations of interest from the Members of the Management Board.

Minutes of the Management Board meeting held on 22 June 2016

3. The minutes of the last meeting, held on 22 June 2016, were agreed as a correct record.
4. pt.11, Cllr C Hersey sort clarification of the terminology used for the scoping of Landscape Partnership Scheme around the 'hurst' and 'den' villages. It was confirmed that this term was in reference to villages that had woodland pig pastures, such as Cowden and Lamberhurst.
5. pt.15, The Unit, to support internal research, has commissioned a Small Settlements Project – the High Weald Sustainable Housing Study – which focuses on how sites can be internally arranged within the landscape. The findings have been circulated to the Officer Steering Group (OSG) on 28 September 2016 and will form part of the sub-design group research.
6. **It was agreed that the High Weald Sustainable Housing Study will be electronically distributed to all Members and hard copies will be supplied at the Joint Advisory Meeting (JAC) to be held on 16 November.**

7. pt.17, Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Sally Marsh informed the Members that the National AONB Association was considering a formal complaint to the Planning Omnibus due to the fundamental changes to the methodology of the LVIA. It has been decided that the Association with Historic England will lobby to change the methodology.

Officer Steering Group Update (OSG)

8. Jason Lavender updated the Members in the absence of the OSG Chairman, David Marlow, on the actions from the OSG held on 28 September 2016.
9. The OSG had a presentation on Environmental Colour Assessment from Jeremy Waygood, Waygood Colours. Jeremy uses a robust Swedish methodology, Natural Colour Assessment (which is also an ISO), to assess colour within the landscape. They survey specific areas of the AONB to produce a numbered colour palette. This allows developers and planners easier access to the correct colours which complement AONB Characteristics. Waygood Colour has produced colour palettes for the Malvern Hills AONB. Through the development of the Malvern Hills AONB colour palette Jeremy worked closely with major suppliers of industrial building materials, including Tata Steel.
10. The Members discussed the importance of getting the right colour scheme for developments in relation to the Character Components of the AONB. Due to the large landscape-scale of the High Weald AONB, the Unit will focus on village fringes, new builds and settlements in-fill. The OSG Officers have been requested to send to Claire Tester areas to be surveyed if a potential colour palette was to be initiated specifically for the AONB. The officers have already received pdf of the presentation. The Unit are currently seeking funding to be able to support this project which ideally should take place this winter.
11. Cllr S Tidy suggested that it may be a project that could be undertaken jointly by the South Downs. Jason Lavender explained that the Unit had recently had a very productive meeting with South Downs to discuss joint initiatives and this would be taken into consideration.
12. **It was agreed:**
 - i. **to circulate a summary of Waygood Colours service to the Members**
 - ii. **the Unit can approach the local authorities to seek funding to produce a High Weald AONB Colour Palette**
13. Claire Tester presented to the OSG the General Advice Note which is based on the Internal Review of Policy Approach to Development Paper produced by the OSG. However, this Note is aimed at an external AONB audience engaged with development. There is also the addition of High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template which focuses the developer's attention on assessment of impact against the Management Plan objectives and the subsequent opportunities for mitigation from the development.
14. **It was agreed that General Advice Note should be noted at the AONB Joint Advisory Committee Meeting to be held on 16 November 2016 and then distributed to the relevant Local Authority Officers.**
15. Sally Marsh informed the Members that a design sub-group was set up to prioritise workload and investigate the viability of managing a High Weald AONB Design Panel. Due to the high expense and the independent nature of managing an bespoke AONB panel it was felt that this was not the direction the Group should follow. However, it was agreed that a task/finishing

group would be initiated to look at specific areas such as sustainable housing, colour assessments, highways and water management. This would also allow the OSG to have access to experts in this area to support the advice notes.

16. A discussion took place on the importance of having the right information at the right time in the planning process. Sally Marsh informed the Members of a pilot that was set up 2 years ago to look at a Cranbrook development. This highlighted that designs begin from the road-network up and once produced are difficult to change. Access at the pre-consultation stage may help with future master-planning if there are solid planning principles to support the AONB Character.
17. **It was agreed that Unit will work with the OSG to set up a AONB guidance sub-group**

Planning

18. Jason Lavender informed the Members that Claire Tester has settled well into her position and is not only looking at individual planning applications but is feeding back to individual Local Authorities on the first stages of Local Planning allocations.
19. The Members were informed that the site allocations within the AONB have increase substantially and continue to focus on major allocations such as 600 houses at Pease Pottage, over 200 in Heathfield and 100 in Mayfield. A discussion on the pressure the Local Authorities are under to increase the site allocations within the AONB took place. Often developers are speculatively contacting landowners to see if they wish to put them up for development but this pressure has noticeably increased and this is seemly being endorsed by the Inspectors' decisions.

Management Plan Review 2019 Timetable

20. Sally Marsh took the Members through the key decision points for the timetable to review the current Management Plan 2019 – 2024.
21. The Members agreed that it should be a light touch review but were made aware that this would still take considerable time to manage. Specific areas would also require a deeper review such as settlement patterns. Natural England (NE) need to be notified of the type of review by January 2018.
22. Sally Marsh, Claire Tester and Charles Winchester will be leading on the Management Plan Review. The Unit are also looking at different ways to engaging a wider AONB audience within the consultation process.

Budget and external funding

23. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that since Defra have confirmed the Units core budget for the next four years, the additional funding secured was allocated to projects for 2016/2017 budget. However, due to an increase in rent from Woodland Enterprise Limited (WEL) of £3,000, as well as increases in salaries as new personnel have been added to the team for planning and land management, it is necessary to transfer this additional funding of 11,000 back to the core budget. It was confirmed that the Unit has not had any rental increase for ten years due to the original negotiation with East Sussex County Council (ESCC).

ESCC property services has negotiated the current rental on the Unit's behalf and have put a proposal in which has not yet been agreed by WEL.

24. The Members were assured that the Unit was constantly looking for other suitable office accommodation. Pinegrove Enterprise Centre, Crowborough was highlighted as a potential opportunity when it is available in two years. One of the barriers of changing premises has been the lack of a fibre optics connection which is currently available at the Woodland Enterprise Centre.
25. Gerry Sherwin also informed the Members of the external funding which the Unit has been involved with securing. The Unit was recently awarded by Natural England (NE), £100,000 over a 5 year period to support the facilitation of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme for landowners with-in the mid-tier scheme. The contract has now been confirmed to support Landowners within the Rother & Dudwell area of the AONB and an initial Launch Meeting has been organised for November 2016.
26. The submission for the National Grid Localised Visual Improvement Project has been agreed by the National Grid Panel and the feedback indicated that it was an outstanding application. However, the project will also be scrutinised by a panel of economists from Ofgem and the Unit are waiting for the results from this. If the bid is successful the grant of £250,000 will support the restoration of hedgerows within the National Grid network corridor. The funds will also cover the Land Management Advisors facilitation time.
27. Woodland Trust has secured £10,000 to survey veteran trees in Dallington Forest area through a charitable trust.
28. The Unit are in the process of securing funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund for an education programme supporting the Crowborough Community Festival – 'on Top of the Weald'. The festival is around the Lost World Theme by Conan Doyle and the funding will support a series of school workshops based on 'Quests' from the popular Welly Walks.
29. Thomas Alty, Finance Manager for East Sussex CC has confirmed that, due the changes in the accounting system, the Unit no longer have to run two parallel systems for proposing grant applications. However, there needs to be a level of scrutiny retained through the Management Board. Due to timings of the applications it is not always possible to inform the Members through the set meetings.
- 30. It was agreed that an email with a short summary of the grant application should be sent to the Management Board Member when appropriate.**
31. The Members thanked Gerry Sherwin for managing the finances in such a robust manner.

Field of Dreams

32. In May 2016, the Unit submitted a 2.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Landscape Project Scheme (LPS), 'Fields of Dreams'. The LPS focuses on the 'hurst' and 'den' villages located on the border of Kent and Sussex and covers the Kent High Weald Landscape character area which has parts of Rother, Wealden and East Sussex areas within the Scheme. A site visit was held in August and the results of this will be sent at the end of October. The other applications in the South East include the Chilterns AONB around High Speed 2 and Culver

Valley near Heathrow. If the Unit is not successful in this round the bid will be resubmitted in May 2017.

- 33. It was agreed that if the application is successful a presentation would be set for Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) on 16 November but if not the JAC will be informed at the March JAC Meeting date.**

Other Projects

34. Sally Marsh informed the Members that the final steering meeting for Field Systems in the Weald was held on 27 September with Jeremy Lake and David McOmish from Heritage England. All outputs are now submitted and the final editing will take place over the next month to be completed by 31 October 2016. Several outputs will be available to support officers understanding of the importance of field systems in the AONB, including Field Systems Assessment Framework and Methodology.
35. Sally Marsh showed the Members a map depicting the different types of Field systems around the Cranbrook area overlaid by the development sites. This gave a strong direction as to where the most valuable field systems were situated, highlighting the concentration of historic boundaries and underlying archaeological features.
36. Historic England would like to take this information forward to work with other AONBs and National Parks. This could potentially be integrated into settlement planning. The OSG officers are supporting the final editing of the reports. The data has already been used by David Marlow as evidence in his assessment of an application at the edge of Ticehurst village.
37. Sally Marsh also informed the Members that she was presenting the Fields Systems Project to the Weald of Kent Preservation Society.
38. The Members were also informed of the update to the historic routeway component data. This was initiated by a request from David Scully for support with updating the Tunbridge Wells BC Rural Lane SPD, in-line with the Cherwell SP. In response the Unit hired a GIS Intern over the summer period. The project was initially set up to complete the historic map regression of public highways and public rights of way for Tunbridge Wells BC, however, the intern was also able to do this for the whole AONB. The Unit now has a comprehensive data set for all extant public historic routeways. Guidance and statistics from the data has been produced and will be circulated to the relevant officers. Helen French, Sevenoaks BC has already received the data to support rights of ways issues for Sevenoaks BC.
39. Dormansland Parish Council which sits on the boundary of the High Weald approached the Unit for guidance on a 'gateway style' signage package. Charles Winchester has now developed AONB Signage Guidance. The guidance should help to prioritise the best area to locate a new sign as well as advising on appropriate designs for the particular need – whether a boundary marker or village sign.
- 40. It was agreed that this guidance should be circulated to the Members and presented at the next JAC in November.**
41. Jason Lavender updated the Members on the 'Restocking in the Weald' project. East Sussex County Council has awarded the project £6,000 and £10,000 of the Unit's project fund had

been allocated to hire a coordinator, Lucy Carnaghan, 2 days per week, to secure future funding.

To date, nine graziers have been identified that are looking for land to graze within the AONB. However, finding landowners to offer grazing tenures has been a slower process. This may be due to the pressure of land development opportunities and the fact that landowners are reluctant to commit to 5-10 year tenures. The Unit has also been in discussions with Ashdown Forest and Wakehurst Place to utilise their land.

Risk Management

42. Gerry Sherwin indicated that the greatest risk, aside from budget, was having the right staff in place. Unfortunately the newly appointed Land Management Advisor, Tamara Taylor has resigned due to personal reasons. Tamara has accomplished a great deal with Matt Pitts developing the Landscape Enhancement Projects. Another person will need to be employed as the workload is too considerable for Matt who works 4 days per week.
43. The Members were also informed that Unit had great success with hiring interns to support specific projects and that over the summer period the Unit employed two interns. Ellen Yardley, GIS intern, worked to update the historic routeways data and Ben Crisford undertook species survey work to support the Landscape Management Programme. The Unit is keen to employ more interns to work on specific projects in the future.
44. The Unit is also planning to recruit a part-time communication officer to refresh the website, and support the increasing amount of media required for the projects on which the Unit has been successfully working.
45. Sally Marsh informed the Members that she is reducing her hours to 2.5FTE as she is beginning a PHD degree in Natural Beauty, focusing on policy and guidance.

AOB

46. The items for JAC agenda were discussed and it was agreed that if Howard Davies was not available to present to the Members about Brexit then Sally Marsh would do a presentation on the Field Systems Project and settlement development.
47. Chairman's Conference is being held on 24 November and Cllr Brian Kentfield, in the absence of Madam Chairman, will attend.
48. The Landscape Enhancement Project requires scrutiny for its projects in the same way the Community Landscape Fund (CLF) was managed. A scrutiny panel is being set up and Jill Davison has agreed to chair, with Cllr Brian Kentfield and Cllr Sylvia Tidy also forming part of the panel. Additional members to the panel will also be recruited, including landowners and additional partners.
49. Cllr S Tidy expressed how well the Brexit and its agricultural implication in the Weald on 4 May had been well received by the attendees and that it had inspired interesting debate.
50. Future dates for JAC Meetings:
 - i. 1 March 2017 - Management Board Meeting
 - ii. 29 March 2017 – Joint Advisory Board Meeting

High Weald Officer Steering Group

Notes of meeting

Wednesday 28 September 2016 at 2pm



Acorn Tourism, Woodland Enterprise, Hastings Road, Flimwell, TN5 7PR

Clerk to JAC: Samantha Nicholas

PRESENT:

David Marlow, Rother District Council (Chairman)
Virginia Pullan, East Sussex County Council (Vice-chairman)
Natalie Bumpus, Wealden District Council
Tim Dyer, West Sussex County Council
Jennifer Hollingum, Mid Sussex District Council
Helen French, Sevenoaks Borough Council
Jason Lavender, Co-Director High Weald AONB Unit
Claire Tester, High Weald AONB Unit
Charles Winchester, High Weald AONB Unit

Action

1. Environmental Colour Assessment Presentation

1.1 Jem Waygood, Waygood Colour, presented to the officers the scientific methodology that could be used to develop an environmental colour assessment for the High Weald AONB. He shared examples from his experience with Malvern Hills AONB and more specific site locations. Jem has also worked with major suppliers to create natural colour palettes for specific building materials. This is a major barrier to introducing an appropriate colour choice for building materials for a new development. The building materials tend to be offered with colour ranges which are unsympathetic to the landscape characteristics.

1.2 The group discussed that developing links with suppliers was essential to be able to encourage more appropriate colour choices. There was also agreement that it would be very effective to have a coherent environment colour palette for the High Weald AONB.

1.3 **The officers were requested to send to Claire Tester suggested areas that were representative for their Local Authority, to be potentially colour assessed.**

Officers

- 1.4 The Environmental Colour Assessment presentation will be distributed to officers. Unit**
- 2. MINUTES**
- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 February 2016 were agreed as a correct record.
- 2.2 David Marlow apologised for not being able to distribute the Rother DC Equestrian Policy and that he was now in a position to do so. David Marlow**
- 2.3 Natalie Bumpus informed the officers that Wealden DC Dark Skies research has been put on hold due to the high cost of the research, between £60-70,000. The initial research was to produce Dark Skies zonal qualities for the Wealden area and to develop a SPD. Dan Oakley, South Downs National Park was also engaged to produce a training programme. Wealden DC has now moved towards a simpler approach using the CPRE Dark Skies data to use this as a platform to inform development.
- 2.4 Charles Winchester has been developing a Dark Skies guidance note with support from Dan Oakley utilising International Dark Skies Guidance. This Guidance is being developed further by South Downs and if available will be shared with the Group at the next meeting.
- 2.5 David Marlow informed the officers that Rother DC have utilised the CPRE Dark Skies data as a basis to assess the zonal qualities within the District.
- 2.6 6.2, The officers were informed that Matthew Nouch is now back with Ashford Borough Council and will be joining the OSG as their representative.
- 2.7 5.1, Charles Winchester informed the officers that he had several enquiries about Parish Maps but these were not necessarily linked to Neighbourhood Plans. Claire Tester updated the officers that there are 20 Parishes that were undertaking the Neighbourhood Planning process within the AONB.
- 3. APOLOGIES**
- 3.1 Apologies for absence were received from; Tom Nutt, Crawley Borough Council, David Greenwood, Surrey County Council, Liz Milne, Kent County Council, Murray Davidson and Sujeet Sharma, Hastings Borough Council, Marie Killip, Tandridge District Council, Jenny Knowles, Tonbridge & Malling District Council. David Scully, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

4 Field Systems in the High Weald

4.1 Charles Winchester informed the officers that the Unit had the final steering meeting on 27 September with Jeremy Lake and David McOmish from Heritage England. All outputs are now submitted and the final editing will take place over the next month to be completed by 31 October 2016.

4.2 David Marlow explained that officers were involved with the development of the Field Assessment Framework at two events held in July at Rother DC and Mid Sussex DC. He reiterated that this is significant research pulling together an essential missing element of the historic data set for field systems.

4.2 David Marlow will be seeking comments from the sub group on the key document, the character statement and assessment framework for final edit by the end of October. David Marlow

5. Historic Routeways

5.1 Initiated by a request from David Scully for support with updating the Tunbridge Wells BC Rural Lane SPD, in-line with the Cherwell SPD, the Unit hired a GIS Intern, over the summer period. The project was initially set up to complete the historic map regression of public highways and public rights of way for Tunbridge Wells BC, however, the intern was also able to do this for the whole AONB. The Unit now has a comprehensive data set for all extant public historic routeways. A set of statistics was also created alongside this data and the GIS layer will be made accessible to the Local Authorities.

5.2 This prompted a discussion on whether each Authority had the most up to date historic dataset. Helen French, Sevenoaks BC, requested a copy of this data as she had to comment on changes to Rights of Way. Claire Tester made the officers aware that she had been consulted on a significant number of these types of applications.

5.3 The Unit will discuss the best method to ensuring the Local Authorities have the most up-to-date GIS layer information including the latest Historic Routeways dataset. A pdf of the Rural Lanes SPD from Cherwell will be circulated to the officers. Unit

6. Local Authority Updates

6.1 The officers updated the group on the Local Authorities activities that impact on the AONB.

- Sevenoaks BC: Gathering evidence for the Local Plan; producing a Green Belt Assessment with Land Use Consultants and will be consulting key stakeholders in the next couple of months.
- Tunbridge Wells BC: Claire Tester on behalf of David Scully informed the officers that Tunbridge Wells BC has launched a consultation on the landscapes of the Borough to help inform the drafting of the revised Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment. A dedicated web page links to an app called 'Your View' which allows people to upload images in real time of the landscapes has been instigated; Along-side the consultation they are also using a dedicated ESRI story map web site, for public viewing of GIS maps.
- Wealden DC: Local Plan is being reviewed and they have several evidence based research programmes running with very tight time schedules. Landscape and Ecology for local site allocations has been split across two agencies due to the size of the workload; Chris Blandford Associates is looking at the rural areas and is in the process of prioritising areas specifically in AONB for early consultation, such as Wadhurst; and the Landscape Partnership is focussing on Hailsham and southern parts of the District. Wealden DC is also engaged in Green Infrastructure research and a Flood Risk Assessment for Wealden & Eastbourne.
- Mid Sussex DC: District Plan has been submitted and had initial Inspector's feedback. The Pease Pottage development has been included in the Plan. 13 Neighbourhood Plans have been approved, some of very high quality. Horsted Keynes is in the process of preparing a plan and Slaugham is re-doing theirs after a previous failed examination.
- East Sussex CC: Continuing to update the County Landscape Character Assessments and they are starting to upload this information onto the ESCC website.
- West Sussex CC: Developing Minerals Plan, which may impact on West Hoathly Parish. They are also developing an environment checklist for Highways Team with further guidance.
- Rother DC: Draft site allocation will go to cabinet on 7 November.

6.2 There was also a discussion of the involvement of Highways role within Landscape Character Assessment. Jason Lavender invited Virginia Pullan to join a Highways meeting arranged with Dr Brewin from ESCC's consultants.

7 Advice Notes

7.1 The officers were asked to feedback on the General Advice Note circulated to them prior to the meeting. This Note is aimed at anyone in the AONB who is involved with development. It builds on the previous

internal guidance note for LPAs with additional material on future advice notes, impact of an LPA's lack of a five year supply of housing and a High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template. This templates gives guidance on how the applicant needs to take due regard to the Management Plan.

7.2 The officers agreed that the template was an excellent way of steering individuals to ensure they understood the importance of the Management Plan. A few suggestions were made for enhancing the flow of the information by incorporating in paragraph numbers and broadening the advice note headings to less specific topics.

7.3 The Unit will update Advice Note and re-send to officers.

Claire Tester

8 LVIA and HLC Training Sessions

8.1 Virginia Pullan had agreed to present to the OSG on the use of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA). However, it was felt there was an opportunity to hold a workshop that focus on how High Weald AONB objectives can be recognised in both Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) and LVIAs. It was also suggested that LCAs and LVIAs could also integrate the Historic Landscape Character data. This is being rolled out to Tunbridge Wells Boroughs at present.

8.2 The Unit will work with LPAs to organise workshops / presentations to incorporate the different data sources available to the Local Authorities aimed at Planning Officers and Landscape Architects.

Claire Tester

9. Design Working Group

9.1 At the previous design working group meetings the different models of managing a design panel had been discussed. The SE Design Panel model has strict regulations of being an independent panel of experts and is therefore costly to set up and run. A more voluntary based lead panel, may be an option, but often it is difficult get experts under these conditions and may not reflect the particular characteristics of the AONB.

9.2 A discussion took place on whether a separate design working group was viable. It was agreed that it might be useful to have a forum to discuss research such as the Sustainable Housing Study and to further develop design principles. It was also suggested that there might be an opportunity to invite expert guests to feed into future advice notes.

9.3 David Marlow commented on the Sustainable Housing Study as it raised interesting questions of how the Local Authorities view space within rural

settings for development and how we really tackle affordable housing. Jason Lavender referred to the CLA report on the contribution landowners could make to solve this problem. Jennifer Hollingum commented that this style of development may be very useful for Neighbourhood Plans as these were often small scale development areas.

- 9.4 It was agreed due to the heavy workload of the officers, David Marlow with Claire Tester would invite officers to join a sub-group to take the design principles and research forward. The meeting will be held before the next OSG Meeting to be held in February 2017.** David Marlow/Claire Tester

10. Management Plan Review Timetable

10.1 Claire Tester took the officers through the key dates for the Management Plan Review 2019 timetable highlighting that the scoping report will be presented to the OSG at the February Meeting. The review will be a light touch approach but this still presents considerable workload for the Unit. This will be taken to the Management Board Meeting on 12 October for approval.

- 10.2 The Management Plan review timetable will be circulated to the officers.** The Unit

11. AOB AND DATES FOR NEXT MEETING

11.1 David Marlow informed the officers that the requests for budgets to be signed off will be sent to the finance officers. He also stressed the importance of supporting the Unit due to the production of the Management Plan and other guidance materials which is of great value to the Local Authorities.

11.2 Jason Lavender informed the officers that they now have a coordinator, Lucy Carnaghan, to manage the Re-stocking in the Weald Project. Jason will be able to update the OSG on the projects progress at the meeting in February.

- 11.3 Dates for the next meeting will be set for February 2017 by doodle poll. The Unit

Committee:	High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Date:	16 November 2016
Title of Report:	Draft Revenue Budget 2017/18
By:	Treasurer to the Joint Advisory Committee
Purpose:	To consider the draft Revenue Budget 2017/18 and agree it as a basis for consultation with contributing bodies

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to approve:

1. the draft budget for 2017/18; and
 2. the commencement of budget consultation with the local authorities and Defra
-

1. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

- 1.1 A draft budget for 2017/18 is attached in Appendix A. It is recommended that the draft budget be approved as a basis for consultation with contributing bodies/authorities.
- 1.2 A balanced core budget has been set for 2017/18. This has been achieved through Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) contribution at the level received in 2016/17, with an inflationary increase of £7,500.
- 1.3 There are a number of key/significant financial issues and risks which are detailed in this report.
- 1.4 Following consultation with contributing bodies/authorities, a final budget for 2017/18 will be presented to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for approval at its March 2017 meeting.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The draft budget should be considered within the following context:

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

- 2.2 As the High Weald is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the JAC is required to carry out many statutory functions on behalf of local authorities under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These statutory duties are set out in detail at the end of the report. At a time of cutbacks in public spending and local authorities having to make considerable savings, it is important that the core funding of the JAC remains sufficient to deliver those statutory services. This ensures that the JAC can continue to manage statutory services in a co-ordinated way.

- 2.3 It should be noted that local authority contributions in the region of £84,700 in 2017/18 are likely to generate additional funds for core activities and projects of at least £454,700.

Defra Core Funding	£222,200
Other Core Income	£5,000
Defra Projects Funding	£42,300
Non-Defra Projects Funding	<u>£185,200</u>
Total External Funding	£454,700
Local Authority Funding	<u>£84,700</u>
Total Contributions	£539,400

The High Weald Unit's Work Plan 2017/18

- 2.4 The budget has been developed to support the implementation of the Unit's rolling work plan.

High Weald JAC Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)

- 2.5 The budget has been developed within the context of the tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding between Defra, Natural England and the National Association Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and the service level agreement between local authorities and High Weald JAC's host authority, East Sussex County Council.

Defra Contribution

- 2.6 The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the 2015 Autumn Statement that following the Comprehensive Spending Review, the funding for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be protected. Defra have since advised that the High Weald AONB's annual budget to March 2020 will be maintained in real terms; rising from £259,985 in 2016/17 to £273,632 in 2019/20.

High Weald JAC Budget 2016/17

- 2.7 The forecast outturn for 2016/17 is to break-even. Additional spend of £4,700 is forecast due to increased salary costs following staff recruitment and increased office costs following office lease and IT equipment renewal. A greater proportion of the Defra contribution has been allocated to core to balance this expenditure. The forecast reserves at 31st March 2017 are £113,000.

3. FINANCIAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The draft budget is presented to the JAC for consideration. Appendix A shows the Core Budget and Appendix B shows an indicative Project Budget. A break-even budget for 2017/18 is presented.
- 3.2 The draft budget assumes the same allocation of the Defra contribution between core and projects as 2015/16; 84% to core and 16% to projects. The draft budget assumes that local authorities will strive to maintain their contributions at the 2016/17 level.

Core Budget – Expenditure

Summary

- 3.3 Inflation has been applied at rate of 1% for staff and 0% for all other costs.
- 3.4 The budget has increased due to rising rental costs and a small increase in staff costs.

Staff Costs

- 3.5 The draft budget allows for a small core team of 5.1 FTE: Director (1.1FTE); Business Manager (0.8FTE); Strategic Planner (0.8FTE); Landscape Advisor (1FTE); Team Support Officer (0.8FTE); and a budget for IT, Communications, Finance and student intern support (0.6FTE).
- 3.6 Staff costs are subject to inflation of 1%, amounting to a £2,200 increase, and incremental progression as a result of revised grades following the Single Status Review of one post and newly appointed staff starting at the bottom of their salary scale, amounting to a further £9,000 increase. The current budget assumes contributions to the East Sussex Pension Fund of 20.30% in 2017/18.

Accommodation/Office Equipment

- 3.6 This is an increased budget that covers the cost of office rent, rates and maintenance and running costs and office supplies. Following renewal of the office lease rental costs have increased by £3,000 p.a.

Partnership running costs and support services

- 3.7 This is a standstill budget that covers the NAAONB membership fee and the costs associated with running JAC meetings, representing the partnership at relevant regional and national forums, producing the annual review and miscellaneous PR costs.
- 3.8 The budget headings assume that IT, personnel and financial support will continue to be provided by ESCC and the JAC's clerk service will continue to be provided in house by the High Weald JAC's Team Support Officer.

Core Budget – Income

Summary

- 3.9 The draft budget shows contributions from local authorities at the same level as 2016/17 and the Defra contribution at the same level received in both 2015/16 and 2016/17, with an inflationary increase of £7,500.

Defra

- 3.10 The 2017/18 core contribution is assumed in this report to be £222,200.

Local Authority Contributions

- 3.11 The draft budget assumes no inflationary increase to the core contributions of local authorities and assumes that they will strive to maintain contributions at the 2016/17 level.

Other Contributions

- 3.12 The draft budget assumes other contributions to the core budget of £5,000 partly from hosted project officers contributing to accommodation costs and partly from charges for Unit services.

Core Budget - Reserves

- 3.13 The JAC reserves at 31st March 2018 are estimated to be £113,000, the same as the forecast for 31st March 2017.

Self-Funding Projects

- 3.14 The indicative Self-funding projects budget is attached at Appendix B. The Partnership's project budget has been rationalised into 4 programmes; Management Plan Research and Evidence; Landscape Enhancement; Community Engagement (including High Weald Heroes) and Project Development.
- 3.15 The project budget allows for 1.8FTE project officers: a Land Management Advisor (0.4FTE), an Outreach Officer (0.8FTE) and an Education Officer (0.6FTE).
- 3.16 Local authority contributions are primarily those made in prior years through the Project Enabling Fund or to specific projects, for example High Weald Heroes.
- 3.17 The indicative budget has increased primarily as a result of successful grant applications to support the Landscape Enhancement Programme.
- 3.18 The Defra grant contribution allocated to Partnership Projects is £42,300.

4. FINANCIAL ISSUES 2017/18 AND BEYOND

- 4.1 Savings of £71,020 were made between 2011 and 2015 as a result of reducing Defra contributions. However Defra have indicated that their contributions will be maintained at the same level with an inflationary increase between 2016 and 2019.
- 4.2 A balanced position has therefore been achieved for 2017/18 assuming local authorities maintain their core contribution at the 2016/17 level.
- 4.3 The Defra contribution is conditional on match funding equivalent to 25% of the core funding in cash terms being secured from other sources, such that Defra funding does not exceed 75% of the total core funding. Maintaining match funding levels is therefore essential.
- 4.4 The JAC continues to consider ways of reducing costs or further increasing other income.

4.5 Reducing the number and hours of core staff further, allocating a greater % of the Defra contribution to core costs and an office relocation remain as options for balancing the budget.

4.6 The JAC needs to retain a minimum reserve of £95,000 to meet redundancy costs.

5. RISKS

5.1 The risks and financial implication that the JAC will wish to note are that the core budget for 2017/18 assumes:

- That Defra maintains its 4-year commitment to protecting National Park and AONB funding.
- That local authorities can maintain their core contributions at the same level as 2016/17 to provide the cash match required to meet the Defra contract requirements.
- That employer's pension costs for 2017/18 will be 20.30%.
- That salary inflation for 2017/18 will be 1%
- That other inflation for 2017/18 will be 0%.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The JAC should note that the draft budget contains a number of budget assumptions which may be affected by changes in Government and the financial environment created by the Brexit.

6.2 The Management Board continues to consider savings option, and alternative contribution sources, so that a balanced budget can continue to be achieved.

6.3 The draft budget for self-financing projects assumes operation of four programmes in 2017/18.

6.4 Support for the draft budget will provide the JAC with the capacity to deliver most of its core functions in 2017/18.

Marie Nickalls
Treasurer to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Statutory purpose of the High Weald AONB

The designation of the High Weald as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) places several statutory duties on local authorities under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:

- **Section 82** affirms the primary purpose of AONBs to conserve and enhance natural beauty
- **Section 84** confirms the powers of local authorities to take all such action expedient to achieve the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
- **Section 85** places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to *have regard* to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. This duty is in addition to the power under section 84 (above)
- **Section 89** creates a statutory responsibility for local authorities to produce and review AONB management plans, where appropriate acting jointly. Management Plans formulate the local authorities policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it.

These duties are principally discharged through the High Weald AONB Unit, acting jointly on behalf of the local authorities, although they apply to all council functions and activities where they affect the use of land, in the AONB.

2015/16	2016/17		2017/18				2018/19	
	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Original Budget £'000	Inflation £'000	Budget Pressures £'000	Other £'000	Budget £'000	Indicative Budget £'000
Actual Details								
Expenditure								
215.8 Staff costs	224.7	228.6	224.7	2.2	0.0	9.0	235.9	239.8
44.0 Accommodation/office equipment	34.2	38.4	34.2	0.0	3.0	0.0	37.2	37.2
7.2 Partnership running costs	11.5	8.1	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.5	11.5
27.3 Support services	27.3	27.3	27.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.3	27.3
294.3 Total Core Expenditure	297.7	302.4	297.7	2.2	3.0	9.0	311.9	315.8
69.6 JAC expenditure on self-funding projects	65.3	114.2	65.3	0.0	0.0	119.9	185.2	94.2
40.9 Defra expenditure on self-funding projects	56.0	45.3	56.0	0.0	0.0	(13.7)	42.3	40.1
-12.5 Project Enabling Fund expenditure on self-funding projects	28.9	0.0	28.9	0.0	0.0	(28.9)	0.0	0.0
98.0 Total JAC expenditure on self-funding projects	150.2	159.5	150.2	0.0	0.0	77.3	227.5	134.3
392.3 Total Gross Expenditure	447.9	461.9	447.9	2.2	3.0	86.3	539.4	450.1
Core Contributions								
214.7 Defra	204.0	214.7	204.0	7.5	3.0	7.7	222.2	224.4
22.4 East Sussex County Council	22.4	22.4	22.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.4	22.4
10.0 Kent County Council	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
9.3 West Sussex County Council	9.3	9.3	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.3	9.3
2.9 Surrey County Council	2.9	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.9
7.2 Wealden District	7.2	7.2	7.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	7.2
7.2 Rother District Council	7.2	7.2	7.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	7.2
5.6 Mid Sussex District Council	5.6	5.6	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6
6.7 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	6.7	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7
4.7 Horsham District Council	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	4.7
3.6 Sevenoaks District Council	3.6	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	3.6
0.8 Ashford Borough Council	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
1.5 Hastings Borough Council	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5
2.2 Tandridge District Council	2.2	2.2	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	2.2
0.3 Crawley Borough Council	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	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	0.0	0.3	0.3
3.6 Other Income	9.0	3.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	(4.0)	5.0	9.0
303.0 Total Core Contributions	297.7	302.4	297.7	7.5	3.0	3.7	311.9	318.1
(12.5) Project Enabling Fund: (to)/from balances	28.9	0.0	28.9	0.0	0.0	(28.9)	0.0	0.0
-12.5 Total Local Authority Project Enabling Fund Contributions	28.9	0.0	28.9	0.0	0.0	(28.9)	0.0	0.0
40.9 Defra contributions to self-funding projects	65.3	45.3	56.0	0.0	0.0	(13.7)	42.3	40.1
69.6 JAC contributions to self-funding projects	56.0	114.2	65.3	0.0	0.0	119.9	185.2	94.2
401.0 Total Contributions	447.9	461.9	447.9	7.5	3.0	81.0	539.4	452.4
8.7 Transfer (from)/to reserves	0.0	(0.1)	0.0	5.3	0.0	(5.3)	0.0	2.3
(8.7) Total (surplus)/deficit for year	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(0.0)	(2.3)
104.4 Reserves Brought Forward	113.1	113.1	113.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	113.0	113.0

HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SELF FUNDING PROJECTS BUDGET 2016/17 & INDICATIVE BUDGET 2017/18

	Budget 2016/17			Outturn 2016/17			Indicative Budget 2017/18		
	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
<u>1 Community Outreach</u>									
JAC expenditure	36.8			18.7			18.8		
Defra		(18.4)			(18.7)			(14.7)	
Local authorities		(18.4)	0.0		0.0			(4.2)	
Other					0.0	0.0			(0.0)
High Weald Heroes									
JAC expenditure	21.0			22.7			23.3		
Defra		(10.5)			(11.4)			(11.4)	
Local authorities		(10.5)			(11.4)			(11.9)	
Other		0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
<u>2 Management Plan Evidence and Guidance</u>									
JAC expenditure	17.2			30.3			15.7		
Defra		(17.2)			(9.7)			(10.7)	
Other			0.0		(20.6)	0.0		(5.0)	0.0
<u>3 Landscape Enhancement</u>									
JAC expenditure	65.3			79.7			161.7		
Environment Agency		0.0			(34.2)			0.0	
Local authorities		(65.3)			(26.8)			(38.1)	
Other			0.0		(18.8)	0.0		(123.6)	0.0
<u>4 Project Development</u>									
JAC expenditure	9.9			8.0			8.0		
Defra		(9.9)			(5.5)			(5.5)	
Local authorities			0.0		(2.5)	0.0		(2.5)	0.0
JAC expenditure (to Appendix A)	150.2	(94.2)		159.5	(114.2)		227.5	(185.2)	
Expenditure funded by Defra (to Appendix A)		(56.0)			(45.3)			(42.3)	
TOTAL JAC expenditure/income	150.2	(150.2)	0.0	159.5	(159.5)	0.0	227.5	(227.5)	0.0

Committee:	High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Date:	16 November 2016
Title of Report:	Advice Notes
By:	AONB Planning Advisor
Purpose:	To note the proposed publication of General Advice Note and the intention to produce more detailed Advice Notes

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to note the proposed publication of a General Advice Note and the intention to produce more detailed Advice Notes to support the objectives in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 23rd March 2016 the Joint Advisory Committee noted the production of a Planning Briefing Paper by the Officer Steering Group (OSG) and agreed that this Briefing Paper should be sent with a covering letter to the appropriate Heads of Planning within the AONB Local Authorities. This was carried out and feedback has been that the Briefing Paper is useful to the Local Authorities.
- 1.2 It is considered that a similar document would also be useful to provide advice about legislation and planning policy in the High Weald AONB for a wider audience, namely all those involved in development proposals in the High Weald. The Unit is frequently contacted about such proposals by developers and their agents as well as members of the public. The publication of an advice note would enable consistent messages to be given about the implications of developing in the High Weald AONB, and in particular help people to understand how the High Weald AONB Management Plan should be applied to such proposals.

2.0 General Advice Note – Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB

- 2.1 The General Advice Note appended to this report is based on the OSG's Planning Briefing Paper in respect of the legislation and planning policies that apply to development proposals in the AONB. Further information has been added on the implications if the Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, as this is an issue common to many of the authorities in the High Weald at present.
- 2.2 In addition a further section is included on how to apply the High Weald Management Plan to development proposals, including a template to assist with testing such proposals against the

objectives in the Management Plan. This template includes examples of how these objectives could be met or mitigation achieved. This template will be updated as our experience grows on how development proposals can help to meet the objectives of the Management Plan.

3.0 Additional Detailed Advice Notes

3.1 The intention is that this General Advice Note will form the parent document for a number of further detailed advice notes. Subjects suggested by the OSG have included housing developments; tourism (such as 'glamping'); and renewable energy installations. These advice notes will be produced by the Unit in consultation with the OSG as resources allow.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

4.1 Members are asked to note the approach set out in the report.

Contact: Claire Tester, AONB Planning Advisor claire.testers@highweald.org

Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB



Produced by: High Weald AONB Unit
October 2016



An Outstanding Medieval Landscape

Our Advice Programme

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The components of the High Weald's natural beauty that make it recognisably distinct are:

- ✦ **Geology, landform, water systems and climate:** deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone from which spring numerous gill streams.
- ✦ **Settlement:** dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets and late medieval villages.
- ✦ **Routeways:** ancient routeways often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.
- ✦ **Woodland:** a great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings
- ✦ **Field and heath :** small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by, and forming a mosaic with, hedgerows and small woodlands

The High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) is a partnership established in 1991 of 15 local authorities, Defra, Natural England and organisations representing farming, woodland, access and community interests. The JAC is responsible for publishing and monitoring the **statutory AONB Management Plan**.

The JAC is supported by a small, dedicated staff team, the **High Weald AONB Unit**, which develops understanding of the High Weald's key components - their history, development, distribution, special qualities, deterioration, damage and loss - to provide an evidence base for the AONB Management Plan and related policy and guidance.

This guidance is based on that understanding and aims to help everybody conserve and enhance **one of England's finest landscapes**.




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The views expressed in this report are those of the AONB Unit and do not necessarily reflect those of High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee members.

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1. Introduction

This Advice Note has been produced to assist all those people involved in making, commenting on and deciding planning applications in, or affecting, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.1. The Natural Beauty of the High Weald

The High Weald was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1983. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance **natural beauty**.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that natural beauty comprises 'landscape' and 'scenic beauty'.

Landscape embraces aspects of landform, geology, flora and fauna, landscape features and the settlement pattern, developed over centuries. **Natural beauty is therefore more than the view.**

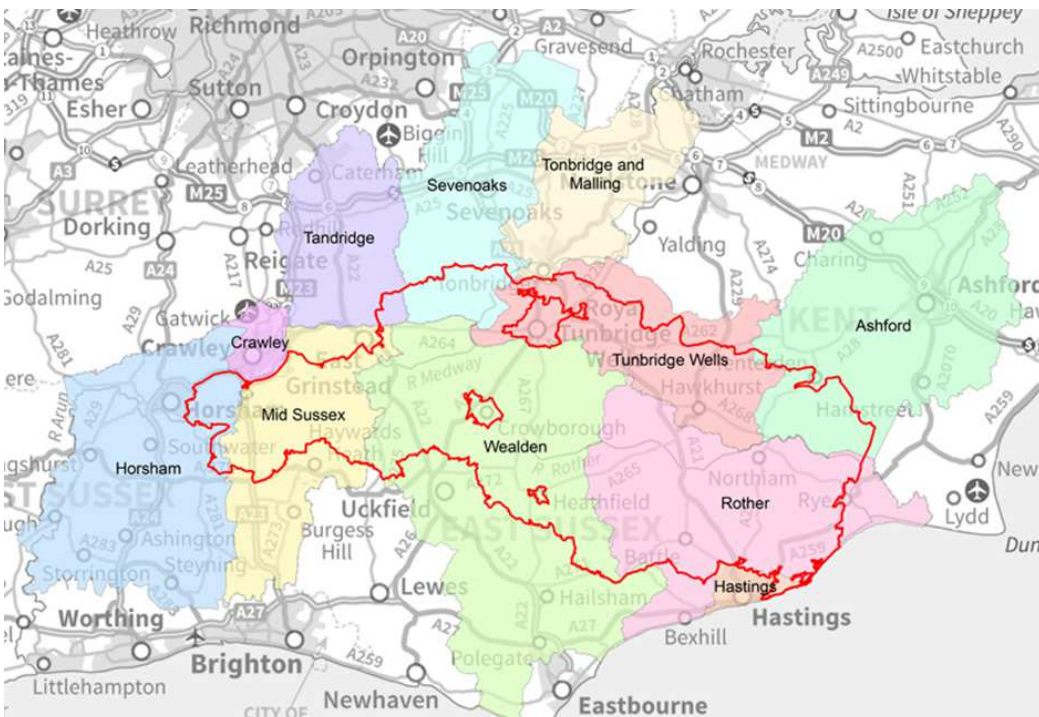
In 2006 the UK signed up to the European Landscape Convention which defines landscape as "an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and human factors".

2.2 The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

The Management Plan has been adopted by the Area's 15 constituent local authorities in order to help conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the High Weald. **The Management Plan defines the Area's natural beauty, its 'character components', and sets objectives for these components.**

To view the current Management Plan, visit

<http://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

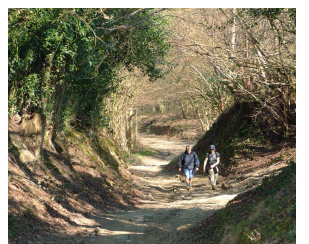


2.3 The Management Plan and Planning

Whilst the AONB Management Plan does not form part of the statutory development plan for a local authority, nor is it a planning policy document, **it is a material consideration** that must be taken into account when preparing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, as well as in determining planning applications. It may contribute evidence or principles in relation to the strategic context for development.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan **includes the 'Statement of Significance'** which defines what makes the High Weald special and identifies the qualities that justify its designation as a nationally important landscape. **It defines the High Weald's natural beauty** in terms of its five key character components. Individual features that are locally distinctive or nationally important are not necessarily reflected in the Statement of Significance, rather it sets out those qualities that make the area as a whole recognisable and distinctive, and different from surrounding areas.

- **Geology, landform, water systems and climate:** deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British sub-oceanic climate.
- **Settlement:** dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
- **Routeways:** ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.
- **Woodland:** the great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to long-term management.
- **Field and heath:** small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing; small holdings; and a non-dominant agriculture; within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.



fundamental components of character of the High Weald AONB are enriched by locally distinctive and nationally important details. These include castles, abbeys, historic parks and gardens; hop gardens and orchards; oast houses and parish churches; veteran trees, a rich and varied biodiversity, and local populations of key threatened species. People value the scenic beauty of the landscape: its ancientness and sense of history around every corner enhanced by the rich array of appealing historic buildings and wonderful views. They appreciate the dark skies; enjoy the relative sense of tranquillity and intimacy that this human scale landscape provides; the ability to get out and about through myriad public rights of ways and the opportunities to get close to nature.



To qualify as an AONB the High Weald landscape as a whole has been judged to be outstanding. All areas of the AONB are of equal value under the designation.

3. The legal and national policy framework for AONBs

3.1 The Legal Framework

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 legislates for the designation of AONBs and National Parks.

The legal framework for AONBs is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 . This includes Section 85 which states that:

“In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty”

‘Relevant authorities’ include government, local authorities, parish councils and statutory undertakers. Section 85 of the Crow Act 2000 can be viewed at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85>

To further AONB objectives, Section 89 of the CRoW Act 2000 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to act jointly to prepare a management plan for an AONB within or partly within their administrative areas which ‘formulates their policy for the management of the area and for carrying out of their functions in relation to it’.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a single statement of national planning policies.

It identifies the purpose of the planning system to contribute to sustainable development and identifies three threads - economic, social and environmental - of sustainable development and states (at paragraph 8) that these should be sought jointly and simultaneously.



3.3 Paragraph 14

At the heart of the NPPF is the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ which should be seen as a ‘golden thread’ running through both plan making and decision taking. In this regard, paragraph 14 states that local planning authorities should seek to meet their objectively assessed development needs and grant development proposals unless:

- **any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or**
- **specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted⁹.**

Footnote 9 of paragraph 14 clarifies that the ‘specific policies’ mentioned in the last bullet point include those relating to AONBs and national nature conservation areas such as sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

3.4 Paragraphs 115 and 116

Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF relate specifically to nationally important landscapes, including AONBs. They state:

115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

116. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way;
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

In addition to the above, the NPPF also contains several generic statements in relation to countryside and landscape planning policy considerations that should be taken into account in any policy or proposal for development within AONBs. Appendix 2 contains a list of the most relevant paragraphs.

3.5 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides the detail to explain and expand upon the policy statements in the NPPF. It states that local authorities should have regard to management plans for AONBs, as these documents underpin partnership working and delivery of designation objectives.



“Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area. As part of this, local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning bodies should have regard to management plans for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as these documents underpin partnership working and delivery of designation objectives. The management plans highlight the value and special qualities of these designations to society and show communities and partners how their activity contributes to protected landscape purposes.

National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plans do not form part of the statutory development plan, but may contribute to setting the strategic context for development by providing evidence and principles, which should be taken into account in the local planning authorities’ Local Plans and any neighbourhood plans in these areas.

National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plans may also be material considerations in making decisions on individual planning applications, where they raise relevant issues”.

3.6 Development Plan Policies

District or Borough Councils are responsible for preparing a **Local Plan** for their area and for taking decisions about most planning applications. **Minerals and Waste Local Plans** are prepared by the County Councils and they will also determine any planning applications for this type of development, as well as development on their own land such as school extensions. Town or Parish Councils may also prepare **Neighbourhood Plans** for their area. These policy documents together comprise the statutory Development Plan.

Planning legislation requires that, to the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (see section 7(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The High Weald AONB Management Plan is one such material planning consideration.

3.7 Five Year Supply of Housing Land

Due to the significant changes to the Planning System since 2010 and the reliance on developers to bring sites forward, many local planning authorities in the High Weald cannot currently demonstrate that they have a five year supply of housing land. Paragraphs 14 and 49 of the NPPF state that this means that policies relevant to the supply of housing are ‘out of date’ and that therefore planning permission for housing should normally be granted on unallocated sites in the countryside unless *“any adverse impacts of*

doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits”.

However, paragraph 14 of the NPPF differentiates between the approach to be taken in normal circumstances and where ‘specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted’. Footnote 9 clarifies that these ‘specific policies’ include those relating to AONBs and national nature conservation areas such as sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

A recent Court of Appeal¹ judgement relating to the interpretation of the phrase “relevant policies for the supply of housing” in paragraph 49 of the NPPF confirms that development plan policies relating to AONB protection are rendered ‘out of date’ if the local authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land. However, paragraph 39 of this judgement also confirms that the purpose of Footnote 9 is to underscore the continuing relevance and importance of these NPPF policies where they apply. In the context of decision-taking, such policies will continue to be relevant even where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date.

¹Great Trippetts Estates v SoS

Therefore, even where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, it must still give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (paragraph 115) and apply the tests in paragraph 116 to proposals for major development.

3.8 Major Development

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF carries a presumption against major development in an AONB except in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. Criteria for assessing the public interest are given, but neither the NPPF nor the PPG define what constitutes ‘major’ development.

The PPG states that ‘whether a proposed development in designated areas should be treated as a major development, will be a matter for the relevant decision taker (i.e. normally the Local Planning Authority), taking into account the proposal in question and the local context’. Therefore a development of 30 homes may be considered major in the context of a small village or hamlet but not be considered major if it adjoins a larger village or town.

4. Assessing proposals against the AONB Management Plan

As mentioned above, the National Planning Practice Guidance states that planning decisions should have regard to management plans for AONBs, as these documents underpin partnership working and delivery of designation objectives. The current High Weald AONB Management Plan can be viewed at:

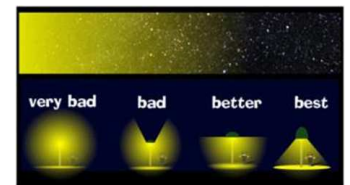
<http://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

The use of the terms “*landscape*” and “*scenic beauty*” in the NPPF is significant. Landscape embraces aspects of landform, geology, flora and fauna, landscape features and the settlement pattern, developed over centuries. Hence, it is expected that both the visual impacts on the intrinsic scenic qualities of an AONB and importantly the impacts of



any site or proposal on its landscape character or features are considered in any landscape assessment.

A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) which may accompany a planning application should distinguish between landscape impact at an AONB scale by reference to the Management Plan and impact on local landscape character. Some LVIAs have a tendency to focus on visual and scenic aspects more than character, at the expense of the key components which contribute to sense of place, distinctiveness, heritage, and tranquillity.



While the extent to which development is visible, especially from public vantage points, is an accepted planning consideration, the Courts have held that the fact that a development is not viewable by the general public does not mean that there is no harm to the intrinsic character of an AONB. This is particularly relevant in a largely enclosed landscape such as the High Weald.

The extent to which the layout and design, including materials, of development proposals are compatible with and reinforce the landscape character of the AONB will be important. Locally sourced materials, particularly timber, can contribute positively to the AONB not just visually but by helping to support the economic management of woodland.

Similarly, developments intended to support the agriculturally productive use of land can also contribute positively to conserving and enhancing the High Weald AONB. This is particularly the case where they support the traditional farming practices that created the High Weald landscape such as livestock farming and the management of grassland meadows.

5. High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template

A template is appended to this Advice Note which is intended to assist in testing a development proposal against the objectives of the Management Plan. This should be used as part of a wider landscape and visual impact assessment of the proposal.

Appendix 1: High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template

<p>Conserving and Enhancing the High Weald AONB: Management Plan 2014-2019 Objective</p>	<p>Assessment of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The magnitude and extent of the possible impact on the component of natural beauty or extent to which objectives can be met.</i> • <i>Any possible impact on the appreciation of its scenic beauty by the public.</i> • <i>The duration of impacts and whether they are reversible.</i> 	<p>Opportunities / Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whether there are any opportunities to conserve and enhance landscape components</i> • <i>How any mitigation proposed will counter the harm identified</i>
<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate</p>		
<p>G1 Objective: To restore the natural function of river catchments</p>	<p><i>e.g. will surface water run-off have an impact on neighbouring gills streams or rivers? Will the natural functioning of a floodplain be hindered?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. improving the natural function of rivers and streams, enabling floodplains to temporarily store floodwater, creating wetland habitat such as wetland woodland and reed beds.</i></p>
<p>G2 Objective: To protect the sandstone outcrops and other important geological features of the AONB</p>	<p><i>e.g. will an exposed sandstone outcrop/cutting and any associated habitat be affected?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. sensitive removal of invasive species from outcrops / cutting; management plans for important geological sites</i></p>
<p>G3 Objective: Climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscapes and habitats</p>	<p><i>e.g. is there a reduction in soil carbon storage potential through the loss of green fields? Will there additional traffic movements be generated?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. the adoption of passivhaus (or other sustainable construction standards) for new development utilising local timber and minimising reliance on fossil fuels.</i></p>
<p>Settlement</p>		
<p>S1 Objective: To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside</p>	<p><i>e.g. will a sense of connection with the countryside be affected through reduced views, reduced or more unattractive access and a significant change in 'sense of place'?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. development designed to accommodate the needs of land based key workers and/or imaginative re-use of rural buildings to support the rural economy; provides the necessary infrastructure to allow installation of (or make provision for) wood-fuel heating systems and adequate firewood storage facilities in the design and layout of the development</i></p>

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<p>Conserving and Enhancing the High Weald AONB: Management Plan 2014-2019 Objective</p>	<p>Assessment of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The magnitude and extent of the possible impact on the component of natural beauty or extent to which objectives can be met.</i> • <i>Any possible impact on the appreciation of its scenic beauty by the public.</i> • <i>The duration of impacts and whether they are reversible.</i> 	<p>Opportunities / Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whether there are any opportunities to conserve and enhance landscape components</i> • <i>How any mitigation proposed will counter the harm identified</i>
<p>S2 Objective: To protect the historic pattern of settlement</p>	<p><i>e.g. an increase in the size and population of the village in relation to its associated hamlets and farmsteads</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. development designed to reflect the scale and form of the village and separation between the settlement and its surrounding farmsteads maintained.</i></p>
<p>S3 Objective: To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald</p>	<p><i>e.g. is the scale and form discordant with surrounding settlement scale and form?</i></p> <p><i>Does the development maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness and the built environment character and the ‘sense of place’ of the High Weald? i.e. design, scale, density, materials, and layout etc.</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. use of local materials, particularly timber, and high design standards that reflect traditional features but are innovative and ‘of their time’ rather than pastiche.</i></p>
<p>Routeways</p>		
<p>R1 Objective: To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways</p>	<p><i>e.g. will the development damage wildflower verges, remove historic features such as banks and hedges, or introduce urbanising features such as wide splays, curbing and signage?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. respect historic routeways and wildflower verges in the design of new developments; create natural curbs; signage reflective of local materials and styles.</i></p>
<p>Woodland</p>		
<p>W1 Objective: To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland</p>	<p><i>e.g. will the development result in a loss of ancient woodland or a degradation of woodland by users of the development?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. avoid loss of ancient woodland, provide an appropriate buffer between woodland and the development and commit to management plan to improve biodiversity of the woodland.</i></p>

Appendix 1: High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template

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<p>W2 Objective: To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale</p>	<p><i>e.g. will the development result in the loss or degradation or existing ecological corridors?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. take opportunities to improve the management of woodland and hedges to support native species of flora and fauna and provide connections between woodlands. Remove non-native species e.g. rhododendron, conifer plantations to enable ecological functioning.</i></p>
<p>W3 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands</p>	<p><i>e.g. will the development have an impact on any historic and archaeological features in woodland, including the woodland boundary?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. survey historic and archaeological features in woodland and set out how they will be protected.</i></p>
<p>W4 Objective: To increase the output of sustainability produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets</p>	<p><i>e.g. will access to woodland to enable management be made more difficult/prevented, for example by the erection of fences? Does the development encourage the sustainable management of woodland?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. use local timber products in new developments to support the sustainable management of woodland in the AONB. Install /make provision for wood burners and space for wood storage into developments to encourage use of local timber as fuel.</i></p>
<p>Field and Heath</p>		
<p>FH1 Objective: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management</p>	<p><i>e.g. does the development sustain or re-introduce land management practices which support the High Weald landscape character such as livestock farming and small scale horticulture? Could the development prevent the agriculturally productive use of fields through loss of workyards, storage barns etc?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. consider opportunities for maintaining/creating new buildings for agricultural use at the same time as other developments.</i></p>

Appendix 1: High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template

<p>Conserving and Enhancing the High Weald AONB: Management Plan 2014-2019 Objective</p>	<p>Assessment of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The magnitude and extent of the possible impact on the component of natural beauty or extent to which objectives can be met.</i> • <i>Any possible impact on the appreciation of its scenic beauty by the public.</i> • <i>The duration of impacts and whether they are reversible.</i> 	<p>Opportunities / Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whether there are any opportunities to conserve and enhance landscape components</i> • <i>How any mitigation proposed will counter the harm identified</i>
<p>FH2 Objective: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands</p>	<p><i>e.g. have you incorporated information about the age and surviving features of fields and boundaries (such as from the Historic Landscape Characterisation) as part of the appraisal of the landscape impacts of proposed development? Does the development encourage the continuation of farming activities as an integral part of the community?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. development scale and design reflective of the area's field size and pattern. 'Lost' boundaries re-instated. Existing boundaries managed and better protected.</i></p>
<p>FH3 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats</p>	<p><i>e.g. have you included information about the ecology of the site and neighbouring areas as part of the appraisal of the proposed development?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. set out a plan for protection and enhancement, taking opportunities to enhance the ecology of the site and neighbouring areas. Prioritise native trees and shrubs, keep non-native, amenity species to a minimum and remove invasive non-native species.</i></p>
<p>FH4 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath</p>	<p><i>e.g. have you incorporated information about historic features as part of the appraisal of the impacts of proposed development?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. set out a plan for protection and enhancement.</i></p>

Appendix 1: High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template

<p>Understanding and enjoying the High Weald's special qualities Management Plan 2014-2019 Objective</p>	<p>Assessment of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The magnitude and extent to which objectives can be met.</i> • <i>The duration of impacts and whether they are reversible/sustainable.</i> 	<p>Opportunities / Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If the proposal limits the achievement of any management plan objective, how this can be mitigated</i>
<p>UE1 Objective: To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald</p>	<p><i>e.g. does the proposal open up access to areas of the High Weald previously inaccessible to the public?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. provide interpretation material / information pack explaining the AONB character of the site and how the development conserves and enhances the area's natural beauty.</i></p>
<p>UE2 Objective: To increase the contribution of individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB</p>	<p><i>e.g. will an area that was conserved and enhanced through public or private contributions be affected by the development?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. enable new property owners to contribute to the High Weald Landscape Trust to support ongoing conservation and enhancement of the area. Support a mechanism to provide information to residents of new developments about the High Weald and volunteering opportunities.</i></p>
<p>UE3 Objective: To increase community involvement in conservation and enhancement of the AONB</p>	<p><i>e.g. will a community project to conserve and enhance the AONB be affected by the development?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. contribute to any community-led initiatives to conserve and enhance the AONB; provide shared storage space and tools to enable community management of local habitats.</i></p>
<p>UE4 Objective: To develop and manage services that support informal open-air recreation to facilitate 'green' use by all residents and visitors</p>	<p><i>e.g. does the development enable pedestrian access to villages/towns and the countryside? Is public transport available and accessible? Does the development include community space for informal, open-air recreation? Is there any impact of increased use of rights of way on neighbouring land management activity?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. enhance and extend public rights of way to meet user's needs for dog walking etc; develop infrastructure and signage to enable responsible access; green travel plans??</i></p>
<p>UE5 Objective: To promote the perceptual and aesthetic qualities that people value</p>	<p><i>e.g. does the development protect tranquillity; dark night skies, valued viewpoints and historic and cultural features?</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. consult with the local community about what matters to them about the area being developed; keep lighting to a minimum and select lighting designs that direct light downwards below the horizontal.</i></p>

Appendix 2: Relevant National Planning Policy Framework Exerts

6. **The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The policies in paragraphs 18 to 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.**
7. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.**
8. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore, **to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.** The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.
14. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.
For **plan-making** this means that:
- local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
 - Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - **specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted⁹.**

For **decision-taking** this means¹⁰:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - **specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted⁹.**

Footnote 9: For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, **an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.**

Footnote 10: Unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

17. Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:

- be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;
- not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- **take account of the different roles and character of different areas**, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, **recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;**
- support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing

resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);

- **contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;**
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- **conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;**
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

28. Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- **promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;**
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

54. In rural areas, exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, **local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate.** Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

55. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are

groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. **Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:**

- **the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or**
- **where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or**
- **where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or**
- **the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:**
 - **be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;**
 - **reflect the highest standards in architecture;**
 - **significantly enhance its immediate setting; and**
 - **be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.**

56. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

61. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, **planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.**

63. **In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.**

64. **Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.**

65. **Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.** Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

75. **Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for**

example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

76. **Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.**
77. **The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:**
- **where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;**
 - **where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and**
 - **where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.**
93. **Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.**
99. **Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.**

Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

109. **The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:**
- **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;**
 - **recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;**

- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
 - remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
112. Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.
113. Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites²⁴, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.

Footnote 24 Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

114. Local planning authorities should:
- set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and
 - maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.
115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.
116. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.
- 117. To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:**
- plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;
 - identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;
 - promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;
 - aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and
 - where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.
- 118. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:**
- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both
 - the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
 - opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;
 - planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss; and
 - the following wildlife sites should be given the same protection as European sites:
 - potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
 - listed or proposed Ramsar sites²⁶; and

- sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Footnote 26: Potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site.

119. The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

123. Planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts²⁷ on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
- mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts²⁷ on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions;
- recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established;²⁸ and
- **identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.**

Footnote 27: See Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

Footnote 28: Subject to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant law.

125. By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to

submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

129. **Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.**
130. **Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.**
131. **In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:**
- **the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;**
 - **the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and**
 - **the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.**
132. **When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.**
133. **Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:**
- **the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and**
 - **no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and**
 - **conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and**

- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
 135. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
 136. Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
 137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and **within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.**
 139. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.
 140. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.
 141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.³⁰ However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Footnote 30: Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 16 November 2016

Title of Report: AONB Management Plan Review Timetable 2017- 2019

By: AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to note the report.

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to introduce the timetable for the review of the AONB Management Plan due by March 2019.

2. Background

2.1 The AONB Management Plan is a statutory document under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Section 89 of this Act requires local authorities to prepare, publish and review the Management Plan every 5 years.

2.2 The current Plan is the third edition of a 20 year strategy first published in 2004. This approach was designed to be robust and future-proof, resulting in an objective led Plan rooted in an understanding of landscape pattern, and structured around AONB purpose and character. To allow for cost-effective review, the published plan was kept concise with supporting evidence, data and guidance available online. This approach has allowed for 'light touch' reviews in 2009 and 2014, minimising the staff resource and budget needed. The next review is now due with a requirement to publish the revised Plan by 2019.

3. Supporting information

3.1 Continuing budget and resource pressures exist across AONB teams and local authorities. It is likely that, for the 2019 review, anything more than a 'light touch' approach would not be possible without additional resources. A scoping report outlining the options will be produced by the AONB Director and further discussions will be held by the Management Board to agree a final approach. A proposed timetable is attached below for information. Decision points are highlighted in red.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact: Sally Marsh, AONB Director, s.marsh@highweald.org

AONB Management Plan Review 2017 to 2019 Timetable

Dec-16		Scoping review
Jan-17		
Feb-17	X	Scoping report to OSG
Mar-17	X	Scope of review approved by MB & JAC
Apr-17	X	Statutory consultees alerted
May-17		
Jun-17	X	Issues and options report to OSG & MB
Jul-17		Plan drafting
Aug-17		
Sep-17		
Oct-17	X	Progress report to OSG & MB & JAC
Nov-17		
Dec-17		
Jan-18	X	Consultation Draft approved by OSG
Feb-18	X	Consultation Draft approved by MB & JAC
Mar-18		Public consultation
Apr-18		
May-18		
Jun-18	X	Scope of revisions agreed by OSG
Jul-18		Amendments & modifications
Aug-18		
Sep-18	X	Final draft agreed by OSG & MB
Oct-18	X	Final draft agreed by JAC
Nov-18		Local Authority adoption processes
Dec-18		
Jan-19		
Feb-19		
Mar-19	X	Plan sent to SofS for formal adoption
Apr-19		
May-19		Dissemination and distribution

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Date: 16 November 2016
Title of Report: Work Programme 2016/17 Update
By: AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to note the report.

1.0 Background

1.1 The 2016/17 budget allows for a core team of 4.6 FTE and a small project team of 1.8FTE. The team has been delivering the AONB Unit's rolling work plan which has 4 programme themes: Management Plan Evidence and Guidance; Landscape Enhancement; Community Outreach including High Weald Heroes and Project Development/Securing Resources.

2.0 Progress April 2016 to October 2016

2.1 Management Plan Evidence

Fieldscales

- Research synthesis of history of field systems research produced
- High Weald Field Systems Character Statement produced
- Field Systems Assessment Framework report produced
- Four Fieldscales case studies completed
- Geophysics magnetometry reports (2) produced revealing old field systems beneath existing fields on two farms
- Historic Environment Assessment of case study site produced
- Six method/communication Plan reports produced
- Four workshops for local planning officers/ members
- Two project steering group meetings
- HLC data extracted, edited and labelled to create a historic fields layer (comprising 8484 unique polygons) to add to the field & heath component data
- £22,000 contract with English Heritage completed

Historic Routeways

- Student intern recruited and High Weald historic routeways dataset updated (6679 new PROW polylines map regressed against up to six different historic map sources) and extended to include historic PROW across the entire High Weald AONB, providing a comprehensive picture of historic routes still extant in the landscape.

2.2 Management Plan Guidance

National, Regional and Local General Advice, Liaison and Consultation

- Two AONB Management Board meetings and two AONB Officer Steering Group meetings
- Meeting with Alison Pritchard, Director of Transformational Change at Defra to promote the work of the AONB partnership; Contributed to the Defra 25-year Environment Plan consultation; Defra State Aid training event; Response to Natural England consultation on Applying the Ecosystem Approach to AONBs submitted via the NAAONB.
- Attended the National Association for AONBs annual conference; Lead on internal AONB liaison and contact with National Grid on the VIP Landscape Enhancement Scheme; Promotion of High Weald as part of nationally-led AONB Outstanding Week; Landscape representative at RGS Conference Tranquillity Workshop.
- Two South-east and East of England Protected Landscapes meetings; team collaboration event with the South Downs National Park Authority to further landscape and rural policy research projects; contributing to the South-east and East of England Protected Landscapes group's London City project which is considering the potential impact of the growth of London on the adjacent and near-by protected landscapes.
- Four LEADER meetings - Wealden and Rother Rural and Central Sussex Local Action Groups; Attended the West Kent Economic Partnership
- Two High Weald Network meetings; Low Weald PAWS Steering Groups (two); Kent High Weald Partnership (one); Meeting with the RSPB to discuss the promotion of Broadwater Warren's 10th anniversary programme; Meeting with Hadlow Agricultural College to discuss possible collaboration on woodland and farming education.
- Meeting with East Sussex County Council's Highways department to discuss the AONB Unit's input to the annual road and bridge maintenance and repairs programme.

Planning Advice and Consultations

- Guidance on Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald produced
- 10 meetings with local authority planning department representatives
- 30 consultations on planning applications or other similar applications made to local authorities
- Nine pre-application proposals
- Five Neighbourhood Plan consultations
- Three Neighbourhood presentations (300+ attendees)
- 10 liaison meetings with communities on local planning issues
- Six local plan consultations
- Five footpath diversion consultations
- Three planning appeals
- Two water authority consultations

AONB sign project

- Following interest from community representatives draft guidance outlining the approach to design and location of AONB signs produced.
- Meetings with relevant county highways underway to assess feasibility of approach and enthusiasm for supporting communities with signage installation.

Other

- Two MSc projects exploring use of drones to automate the identification of unimproved grassland supported.
- Rapid Grassland Assessment Phase 2: study area surveyed to ground truth results of rapid assessment.
- High Weald Sustainable Housing contract, exploring scope for low cost, high density housing in keeping with landscape character managed and report produced.
- Meeting and site visit with Waygood Colour to discuss scope to produce practical guidance on the use of colour in developments in the AONB.

2.3 Landscape Enhancement

Restocking the Weald

- Lucy Carnaghan recruited as a Restocking Coordinator to work with non-farming landowners, farm entrants and a range of organisations to progress the recommendations of the Restocking the High Weald reports.
- Promotional leaflet produced and distributed widely including at Hailsham Livestock Market, autumn ploughing matches, the Dolphin Sheep Fair, and the South of England Autumn Game Fair.
- Press article on the project published in South East Farmer, Sussex Life, and in the newsletters of the CLA, NFU, the High Weald AONB partnership, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, and Natural England.
- Restocking website page set-up with links to key organizations.
- 12 farm entrants registered as potential graziers and a growing number of landowners (currently five) interested in participating in the project.
- Land agents visited; Batcheller Monkhouse, Samuel and Son, Watsons, Strutt and Parker, and CLM.

General Advice and Support

- 13 advisory site visits undertaken for landowners across the High Weald
- Stonegate Primary school, Battle Town Council and other three private landowners assisted with Sussex Lund applications (all successful).

Rother Water Catchment Area

- Completed work with Wild Trout Trust and Internal Drainage Board to improve fish access in the Doleham Ditch.
- Works completed at two sites with Brede Habitat Enhancement grant awards from prior years.
- Small grant awarded for meadow enhancement at Red Barn Field, Sedlescombe and site management plan produced.
- Small grant awarded for meadow enhancement at Doleham Farm.
- Two barn owl boxes installed at Quarry Farm, Bodiam and a project to develop a wetland area next to the Rother progressed.
- Large-scale River Dudwell enhancement project identified and developed to demonstrate value of Papa pump cattle drinking systems.

- Small-scale wetland creation project in development working with Newenden Parish Council
- Eleven boundary planting and restoration projects developed and agreed with landowners within the vicinity of the National Grid powerlines

Upper Rother and Dudwell Landowner Group

- Student intern recruited and invasive species survey of the X km of the River Rother from Mayfield to Etchingham completed and invasive species strategy produced
- Workshop to enable landowners to apply to mid-tier Countryside Stewardship held
- Support with three mid-tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme applications provided
- Landowner Group launched and consultation on Group's priorities underway
- Turtle Dove habitat enhancement project initiated

Rotherfield Village Meadows Project

- Four applications to Sussex Lund to enable traditional meadow management supported (all successful) including proposals for land owned by the Powdermill Trust and Millenium Green Trust
- Presentation delivered to Rotherfield Millennium Green AGM
- Rotherfield Meadows Project community meeting organised and delivered
- Rotherfield Meadows Project Management Plan in development

2.4 Community Outreach including High Weald Heroes

High Weald Heroes

- 24 primary schools participating in 2016/17 to date; 27 individual learning sessions delivered
- Creation of 5 new school Welly Walk routes, 1 Welly Walk launched and 2 Welly Walk leaflets published
- Big Wildflower Count 2016 developed and promoted; 6 schools (230 children) participating
- Whopper Welly Walk 2016 promoted and supported; 4 schools (634 children) participating
- 6 mapping workshops, both indoors and in school grounds
- 7 staff advisory sessions; 1 after-school training sessions and a further 6 teacher advisory sessions
- 2 school assemblies; 1 Meadows assembly and 1 Welly Walk assembly
- 15 outdoor workshops/walks including general Welly Walks (3) plus new themed workshops/walks: rocks and soils, meadow surveying , science (6) and mapping (6)
- Creation of 5 new education resources: Pre-history handling box linked to a set of information cards for pupils and one for teachers; adapted Meadows play for assemblies with accompanying ppt; Landscape art activity cards linked to fieldscape activity cards; Rocks and soils activity cards with accompanying ppt; and 6 new school-specific spotter sheets
- Circulation of 2 Enews to all 80 HWH schools

Community Outreach

- Presentation to Weald of Kent Preservation Society (100 + attendees); Making of the High Weald guided walk for Wealden Walking Festival and presentation to the Birch Wood Association, Bidborough.

- Crowborough Community Festival Association assisted with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant application for a Conan Doyle Lost World Fun Day and natural environment focused school outreach programme.
- Website, social media and e-news (four) used to promote messages and activity relevant to achieving High Weald Management Plan objectives; two media releases circulated.
- Event for farmers and landowners 'Brexit and the possible impact on agriculture in the Weald.'

2.5 Project Development/Securing Resources

- Contract of £107,500 awarded by the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund to support the Upper Rother and Dudwell Landowner Group to work at a landscape scale to improve the local natural environment for the next 5 years.
- Small-scale contract to assess 50 Sussex Lund applications secured and delivered.
- Contribution of £10,000 secured from the Peter William George Smith Charitable Trust to undertake a veteran tree survey of the Dallington Forest area (480ha) and contract awarded.
- Application for a £199,860 grant for a £266,480 boundary restoration project submitted to the Visual Impact Assessment Landscape Enhancement Initiative (extremely positive feedback on quality of the application, agreed in principal, subject to Ofgem sign-off).
- Outline but significant application for a £2.1 million grant towards a £2.7 million, predominately Kent-focused, landscape partnership scheme submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and site visit for assessors organised and delivered.

2.6 Other

- Office lease renewal being progressed with support from East Sussex County Council.
- New ESCC file storage system Sharepoint set up to reflect Unit's focus, work to address issues prior to full adoption ongoing.
- GIS system cleansed and rationalised to enable data storage and management.
- QGIS (open source and therefore free) software installed and staff trained in its use enabling all staff to use GIS to support their work.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact: Jason Lavender, AONB Director (job share) j.lavender@highweald.org

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 16 November 2016

Title of Report: AONB Signs Guidance

By: AONB Landscape Advisor

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to note the report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 AONB signs have the potential to significantly raise the public's awareness of both the area and its designation. Moreover, according to experiences in other AONBs, signs also deliver a number of additional benefits, including:
- Promoting pride in the local area
 - Creating a sense of regional identity
 - Helping improve people's understanding of the landscape and its character
 - Stimulating a desire to care for and conserve the landscape and its special features
 - Raising awareness of the quality of the landscape as being on a par with National Parks.
- 1.2 In the last few months there have been a number of enquiries about the possibility of installing AONB signs in villages/parishes. There have also been some non-standard AONB signs already installed, for example in Ticehurst. This interest in AONB signage seems to be being driven in part by the ongoing production of Neighbourhood Plans, and in part by increasing development pressure and a concern that the area's special status is being ignored/going unrecognised.
- 1.3 A consistent and appropriate approach to AONB signage – applied across the length and breadth of the High Weald – will more effectively raise awareness of the AONB designation than a piecemeal approach and this has driven the need for AONB Unit involvement.

2.0 Supporting information

- 2.1 In response to the above, the AONB Unit has produced a guidance document laying out the principles that should guide sign installation in the High Weald.
- 2.2 The guidance provides an overview of the rationale for installing AONB signage, the three basic kinds of AONB sign, the principles that should guide their location, and the design approach that they should all follow.

- 2.3 The guidance provides examples of the diverse range of AONB signs produced and installed in other protected landscapes, as well as a rationale for why the High Weald should adopt a relatively “standard” highways-style approach.
- 2.4 In addition to the guidance, quotes for the cost of sign production have been sought from sign manufactures and draft designs produced. Local timber producers have also been contacted to quote for the cost of supplying oak posts on which to mount the signs. These costs have been summed to act as an indicative cost guide.
- 2.6 To help get a better sense of the various practical considerations and constraints involved – as well as the installation costs – the various county highways authorities will be consulted over the coming months and the guidance updated and expanded based on those conversations.
- 2.8 To raise awareness of the guidance, promotion will eventually be done through the High Weald AONB e-newsletter and website.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

- 3.1 Given the Unit’s limited resources and staff time, the approach taken (i.e. providing guidance) will both enable interested communities to install and encourage consistent and cost effective approach.
- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact: Charles Winchester, Landscape Advisor, charles.winchester@highweald.org

High Weald AONB Sign Guidance



Produced by: High Weald AONB Unit
October 2016



An Outstanding Medieval Landscape

Our Advice Programme

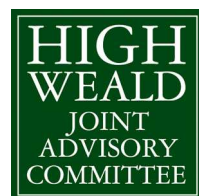
The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The components of the High Weald's natural beauty that make it recognisably distinct are:

- ✦ **Geology, landform, water systems and climate:** deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone from which spring numerous gill streams.
- ✦ **Settlement:** dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets and late medieval villages.
- ✦ **Routeways:** ancient routeways often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.
- ✦ **Woodland:** a great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings
- ✦ **Field and heath :** small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by, and forming a mosaic with, hedgerows and small woodlands

The High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) is a partnership established in 1991 of 15 local authorities, Defra, Natural England and organisations representing farming, woodland, access and community interests. The JAC is responsible for publishing and monitoring the **statutory AONB Management Plan**.

The JAC is supported by a small, dedicated staff team, the **High Weald AONB Unit**, which develops understanding of the High Weald's key components - their history, development, distribution, special qualities, deterioration, damage and loss - to provide an evidence base for the AONB Management Plan and related policy and guidance.

This guidance is based on that understanding and aims to help everybody conserve and enhance **one of England's finest landscapes**.



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1. Introduction

1.1 The rationale for installing AONB signs

A number of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the Kent Downs, the Surrey Hills, the Chilterns, and the Quantocks, have installed signposts highlighting the existence of the designation. Typically these have taken the form of fairly standard roadside signs marking either the boundary of the AONB, or the fact that a village is located within the AONB itself. In addition, some AONBs have taken a slightly different approach, flagging up “gateway” towns and villages on the edge of the AONB, or using non-standard signs or markers/sculptures to signal entry into the protected landscape.

However, regardless of the type and style of sign the objective is the same: to raise awareness of the area and its designation to visitors and locals alike.

In the High Weald the rationale for installing signs is no different. The primary purpose of installing High Weald AONB signs is to raise public awareness of the areas’ designation and location. However, according to experience in other AONBs, signs can also deliver a number of additional benefits beyond profile-raising, including:

- Promoting pride in the local area
- Creating a sense of regional identity
- Helping improve people’s understanding of the landscape and its character
- Stimulating a desire to care for and conserve the landscape and its special features
- Raising awareness of the quality of the landscape as being on a par with National Parks.

Although there is no data to formally prove or quantify these benefits, staff members at other AONBs (including the Kent Downs and Surrey Hills) attest anecdotally to the effectiveness of AONB signs as a means to improving awareness and understanding.

1.2 The purpose of this strategy

The High Weald AONB sign strategy has two broad purposes:

1. To lay out the principles for choosing the location of AONB signs – including boundary signs, village signs and gateways signs;
2. To provide guidance on the design of the signs themselves.

The guidance should help to prioritise the best area(s) to locate a new sign. It should also help avoid a piecemeal approach and ensure that appropriate and consistent AONB sign designs are installed across the length and breadth of the High Weald.

2. Three types of AONB sign

2.1 High Weald AONB boundary signs

The first – and perhaps most obvious – type of AONB-related sign is the AONB boundary sign. These signs are placed near the boundary of the AONB and are designed to highlight the fact you are entering a protected landscape.

2.2 High Weald AONB village signs

The second type of AONB sign is the village sign. These signs are placed at entrance to a village (or town) and are designed to highlight the fact you are entering a settlement located within the High Weald AONB.

2.3 High Weald gateway signs

The final type of sign is the gateway sign. Like village signs, these signs are placed at the entrances to villages (or towns) on the immediate edge of the AONB boundary. Their purpose is to highlight the fact that you are about to enter the AONB even though you are not already within its bounds. These signs should be used sparingly and only in appropriate locations.

3. Location strategy

3.1 High Weald AONB boundary signs

Given that raising awareness of the designation is one of the main reasons for installing AONB signs, roads which tend to have higher volumes of traffic should be a higher priority than lesser used smaller roads.

Nevertheless, certain roadside locations may be chosen over others for particular reasons – e.g. the availability of funding, degree of local support, or the suitability of that location due its particular context (for example, it may be best to avoid placing signs in areas where the natural beauty of that location is not immediately apparent, such as in less rural locations, as this could appear misleading/confusing to members of the public).

Generally, the following principles should guide the placement of “High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” boundary signs:

- All things being equal busier roads should be favoured over quieter roads
- Locations where there is a stark juxtaposition between the natural beauty/characteristic features of the AONB and the surrounding area is clear should be favoured over locations where the difference between the designated and non-designated area is less obvious
- If possible an even spread of locations around the AONB boundary – including internal boundaries, such as the Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough cut-outs – should be sought
- Boundary signs should be sited in locations relatively free of other signs to ensure the designation is not lost in a sea of clutter
- Conversely, boundary signs should avoid contributing to sign clutter in sensitive areas that are relatively clutter-free
- Signs should be placed in locations where they are clearly legible from a car – something that is particularly important on faster road

3.2 High Weald AONB village signs

The following principles should guide the placement of High Weald AONB village signs:

- All things being equal busier/main roads into and out of the village should be favoured over quieter roads
- Where replacement is not possible AONB signs should be combined with/ appended to existing village signs to avoid contributing to sign clutter
- Where Neighbourhood Plans are in the process of being produced/implemented, the installation of High Weald village signs may be encouraged to boost recognition of – and local pride in – the AONB
- High Weald AONB signs should ideally be sited in places where the transition from countryside to village is clear.

3.3 High Weald gateway signs

The following principles should guide the placement of High Weald AONB gateway signs:

- AONB gateway signs should be used sparingly and only where the village is situated immediately adjacent to the AONB. All things being equal boundary signs and village signs should be prioritised over gateway signs
- Where replacement is not possible AONB signs should be appended to existing village signs to avoid contributing to sign clutter
- Where Neighbourhood Plans are in the process of being produced/implemented, the installation of High Weald gateway signs may be encouraged to boost recognition of – and local pride in – the AONB
- High Weald AONB signs should ideally be sited in places where the transition from countryside to village is clear, and – specifically in the case of gateway signs – as close to the AONB boundary as possible.

4. Design guidance

4.1 The wider AONB context

As previously mentioned, a number of other AONBs across the country have decided to promote the installation of signs in order to raise awareness of the designation and their landscapes. These signs have taken a diverse range of forms, from fairly standard metal and plastic road signs, to stone marker posts, to wooden sculptures constructed from locally sourced timber. To get a flavour of this diversity, some of the different AONB sign designs are displayed in the images below.

Figure 1. Example of an “In the...” AONB village sign in the Kent Downs.



Figure 2. Example of a two part AONB village sign on oak posts in the Chilterns.



Figure 3. Example of a gateway AONB village sign on oak posts in the Surrey Hills.



Figure 4. Example of an AONB boundary sign on a stone marker post in the Cotswolds.



Figure 5. Example of a metal AONB boundary sign on a metal post in the Forest of Bowland.



Figure 6. Example of a wooden (oak) AONB boundary sculpture in the Surrey Hills.



4.2 The High Weald AONB approach

Given that the overarching purpose of installing AONB signs is to raise awareness of both the designation and the area, ensuring all signs follow a consistent design is crucial to boosting recognition across the region through the promotion of a unified identity/brand.

Furthermore, in view of the High Weald's large size (it is the largest AONB in the South East and the fourth largest nationally), as well as its administrative complexity (it covers 15 different local authorities and 99 parishes), the overall approach to sign design will seek to remain in keeping with relatively standard highway signs. This approach has several advantages.

- It reduces cost. Producing standard highway-style signs is cheaper than making more elaborate sculptures, or bespoke metal or stone designs.
 - It makes the process of attaining highway authority permission easier, as non-standard designs must be rigorously assessed to ensure they meet the relevant safety standards. Moreover, even if non-standard signs are approved there remain issues around ongoing maintenance costs, as well as sometimes needing to be insured against damage and theft.
 - Despite not being as visually interesting as non-standard design (e.g. the wooden sculptures used in the Surrey Hills AONB), taking a more standard highway-style approach still provides leeway for personalisation — for by adding a 'heritage' style font for elements of the AONB wording, for example.
 - The use of a more standard approach to sign design means that AONB-related signage can be more easily incorporated into existing village signs, either when they are replaced or through the addition of a strip beneath the existing highways-approved sign. This ease of incorporation into the existing sign environment has the added advantage of reducing sign clutter through the proliferation of non-standard signs in addition to the pre-existing highways signage
- This approach has been successfully deployed on a large scale in other AONBs, such as the Kent Downs, and will be easier to rollout over the long-term than some of the non-standard approaches taken in other AONBs where future replication may be problematic
 - Using a highways-style approach helps to ensure the original aim of consistency is achieved, as broadly following existing highways designs makes it easier for AONB signs of all types – boundary markers, village and gateway signs – to adhere to a similar template. In the absence of such a template, there may be a temptation to introduce different style signs marking the boundary to those highlighting villages in the AONB. By avoiding this and maintaining a more uniform and 'official' approach, it will be easier to achieve the ultimate goal of raising the public's recognition of the High Weald AONB as a single designated area.

However, despite opting for a relatively uniform and standardised approach, not all AONB signs will appear exactly the same. This is due to the fact that there will be several different types of sign, but each incorporating common design principles. The three broad types of sign – and the principles governing their design – are identified in the following sections.

4.3 High Weald AONB boundary signs

The following principles should guide the design of "High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" boundary signs:

- All signs should use the same typeface (Times New Roman) in order to ensure consistency across the area and thus improve public recognition, as well as to convey a "heritage" feel
- The first line of text (in this case "High Weald") should be capitalised whilst Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and AONB – "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" – should be spelled out in full

- “High Weald” should appear on its own line in capital letters, with “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” in lowercase letters, on a single line below
- Where possible new signs should be mounted on locally sourced oak posts 8ft (c.2.4m) in length, depending on the requirements of each particular site. Using oak posts will help contribute to Objective W4 (p.39) of the High Weald AONB Management Plan — *“To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets”* — as well as to add to local character. Brown, black or grey recycled plastic posts (with no significant difference in cost) may, however, be acceptable where signs occur near/adjacent to other signs also mounted on black posts
- A simplified version of the High Weald AONB area logo should be used (i.e. one that only displays a black silhouette of the anvil) rather than the standard logo, which is too small to read on a road sign
- Detailed information on the size, materials, colours, font etc. may be found in in Appendix A.

Figure 7. High Weald AONB boundary sign option 1.



Figure 8. High Weald AONB boundary sign option 2.



Figure 9. High Weald AONB boundary sign option 3.



4.4 High Weald AONB village signs

The following principles should guide the design of “High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” boundary signs:

- All signs should use the same typeface (Times New Roman) in order to ensure consistency across the area and thus improve public recognition, as well as to convey a “heritage” feel
- The first line of text (in this case “High Weald”) should be capitalised whilst Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and AONB – “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” – should be spelled out in full
- “In the High Weald” should appear on its own line in capital letters, with “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” in lowercase letters, on a single line below
- Where possible new signs should be mounted on locally sourced oak posts 8ft (c.2.4m) in length, depending on the requirements of each particular site. Using oak posts will help contribute to Objective W4 (p.39) of the High Weald AONB Management Plan — “*To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets*” — as well as to add to local character. Brown, black or grey recycled plastic posts (with no significant difference in cost) may, however, be acceptable where signs occur near/adjacent to other signs also mounted on black posts
- A simplified version of the High Weald AONB area logo should be used (i.e. one that only displays a black silhouette of the anvil) rather than the standard logo, which is too small to read on a road sign
- “In the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” can appear on either the same sign as the village name or on a new strip below, depending on whether it is a sign replacement or an addition to an existing sign

- Detailed information on size, materials, colours, font etc. may be found in Appendix B.

Figure 10. High Weald AONB village sign option 1 (for use when installing a new village sign).

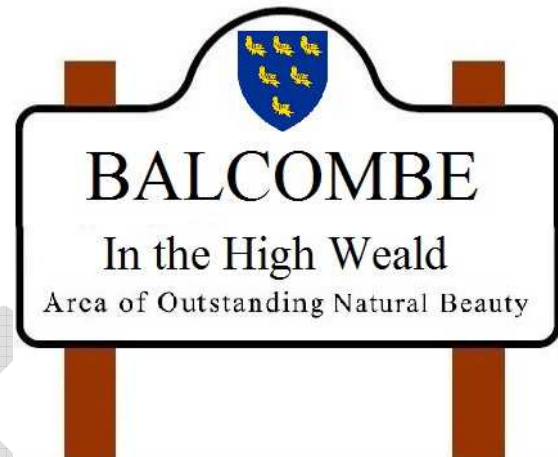
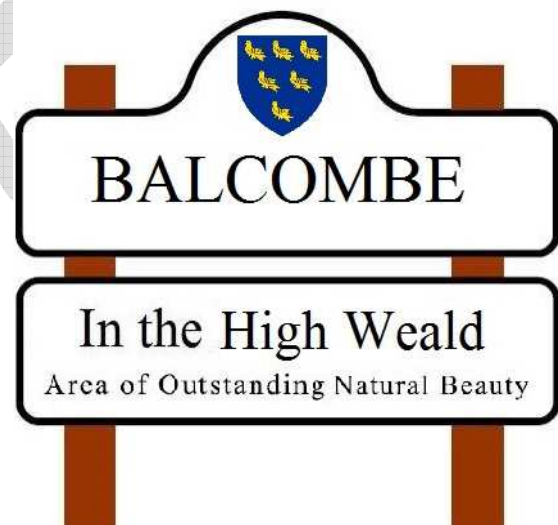


Figure 11. High Weald AONB village sign option 2 (for use when adding to existing village signs).



4.5 High Weald AONB “Gateway” signs

The following principles should guide the design of “High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” boundary signs:

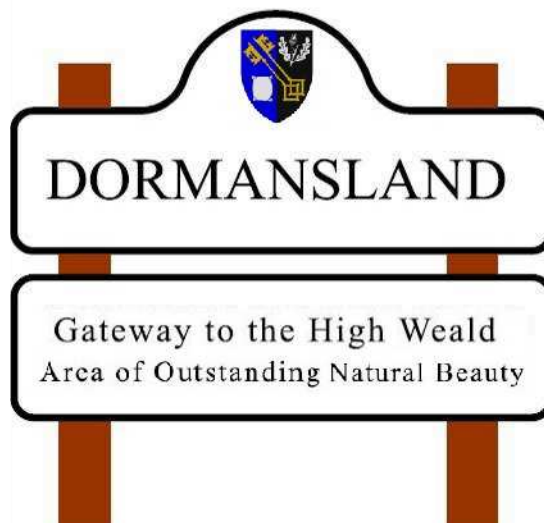
- All signs should use the same typeface (Times New Roman) in order to ensure consistency across the area and thus improve public recognition, as well as to convey a “heritage” feel
- The first line of text (in this case “High Weald”) should be capitalised whilst Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and AONB – “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” – should be spelled out in full
- “Gateway to the High Weald” should appear on its own line in capital letters, with “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” in lowercase letters, on a single line below
- Where possible new signs should be mounted on locally sourced oak posts 8ft (c.2.4m) in length, depending on the requirements of each particular site. Using oak posts will help contribute to Objective W4 (p.39) of the High Weald AONB Management Plan – *“To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets”* – as well as to add to local character. Brown, black or grey recycled plastic posts (with no significant difference in cost) may, however, be acceptable where signs occur near/adjacent to other signs also mounted on black posts
- A simplified version of the High Weald AONB area logo should be used (i.e. one that only displays a black silhouette of the anvil) rather than the standard logo, which is too small to read on a road sign

- “Gateway to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” can appear on either the same sign as the village name or on a new strip below, depending on whether it is a sign replacement or an addition to an existing sign
- Detailed information on the size, materials, colours, font etc. may be found in Appendix C.

Figure 12. High Weald AONB gateway sign option 1 (for use when replacing old village signs).



Figure 13. High Weald AONB gateway sign option 2 (for use when adding to an existing village sign).



Appendix A

High Weald AONB sign design specifications – boundary signs

The High Weald AONB boundary signs consist of three components which are constructed in either one or two parts.

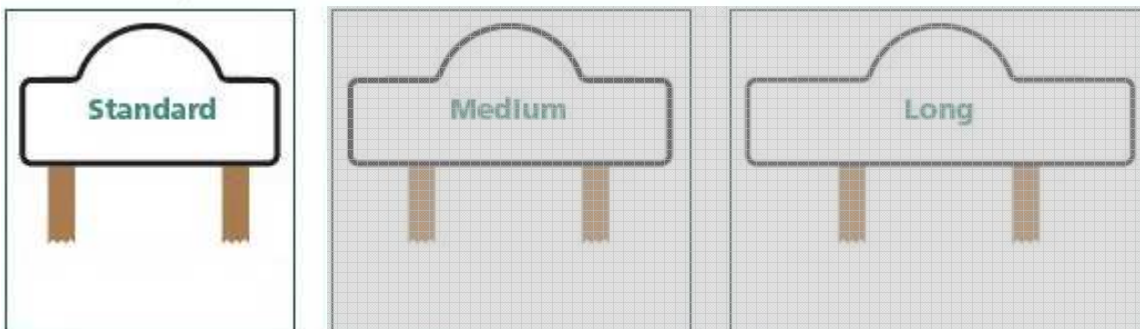
A 1. Village or County Logo

A 2. “High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”



Overall Size

Part A come in three lengths, standard, medium and long to accommodate the number of characters in village names. However, in the case of AONB boundary signs, only the standard is used.



Materials

Part A is constructed using Dibond, an aluminium faced composite sheet with a polythene cover; and digital or vinyl cut lettering. The logo is applied using a digital process or vinyl cutting depending on the complexity and colour.

The wooden posts used for mounting the sign are 4inch x 4inch wooden oak posts. These are generally 8ft long. This is to allow them to be seated securely into the ground.

Other considerations

Approval is required by the relevant County Council manager including a site survey prior to construction.

The site should be scanned to ensure no pipework is underneath.

The optimum height of the sign is 5ft (c.1.5m).

Appendix B

High Weald AONB sign design specifications – village signs

The High Weald AONB village signs consist of three components which are constructed in either one or two parts.

One part version:

A 1. Village or County Logo

A 2. Village Name & “In the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”

Two part version:

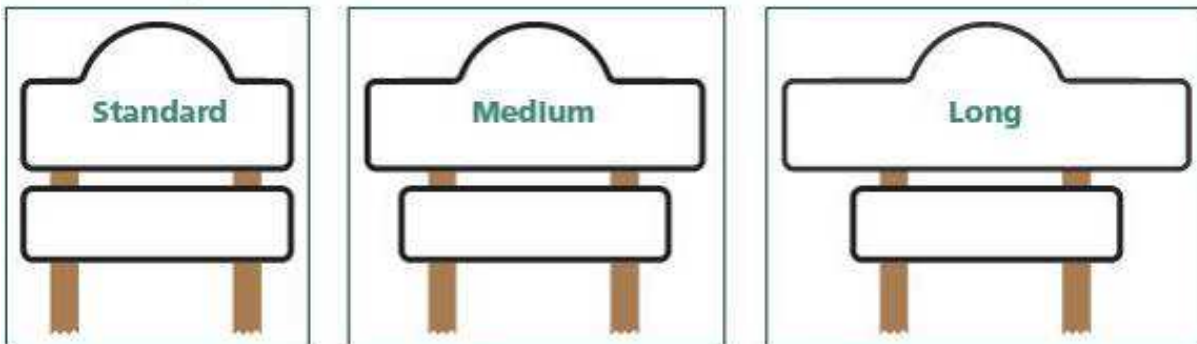
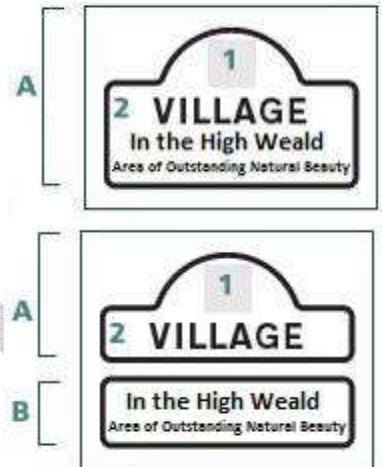
B 1. Village or County Logo

B 2. Village Name

B 3. “In the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”

Overall Size

Over and above this part A come in three lengths, standard, medium and long to accommodate the number of characters in village names. Wherever possible it is recommended standard is used.



Materials

Part A and B Village signs are constructed using Dibond, an aluminium faced composite sheet with a polythene cover; and digital or vinyl cut lettering. The logo is applied using a digital process or vinyl cutting depending on the complexity and colour.

The wooden posts used for mounting the sign are 4inch x 4inch wooden oak posts. These are generally 8ft long. This is to allow them to be seated securely into the ground.

Other considerations

Approval is required by the relevant County Council manager including a site survey prior to construction.

The site should be scanned to ensure no pipework is underneath.

The optimum height of the sign is 5ft (c.1.5m).

Appendix C

High Weald AONB sign design specifications – gateway signs

The High Weald AONB village signs consist of three components which are constructed in either one or two parts.

One part version:

A 1. Village or County Logo

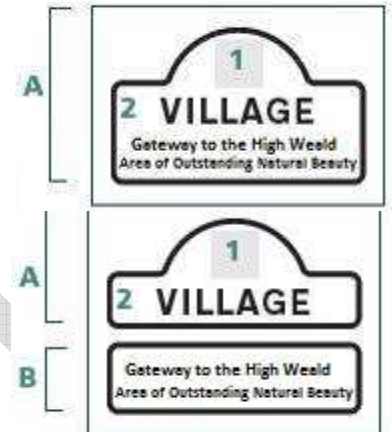
A 2. Village Name & “Gateway to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”

Two part version:

B 1. Village or County Logo

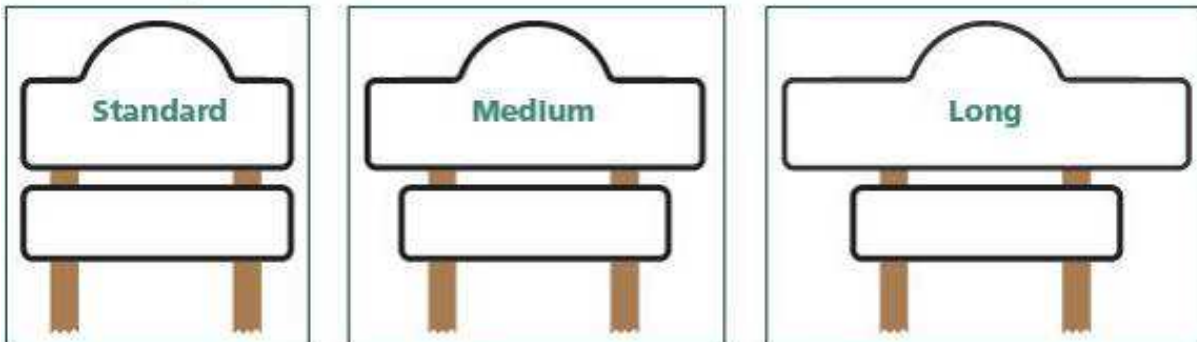
B 2. Village Name

B 3. “Gateway to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”



Overall Size

Over and above this part A come in three lengths, standard, medium and long to accommodate the number of characters in village names. Wherever possible it is recommended standard is used.



Materials

Part A and B Gateway signs are constructed using Dibond, an aluminium faced composite sheet with a polythene cover; and digital or vinyl cut lettering. The logo is applied using a digital process or vinyl cutting depending on the complexity and colour.

The wooden posts used for mounting the sign are 4inch x 4inch wooden oak posts. These are generally 8ft long. This is to allow them to be seated securely into the ground.

Other considerations

Approval is required by the relevant County Council manager including a site survey prior to construction.

The site should be scanned to ensure no pipework is underneath.

The optimum height of the sign is 5ft above ground level (c.1.5m).

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 16 November 2016

Title of Report: Risk Management

By: AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

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

1.0 Background

- 1.1 For the last eight or so years and following a requirement put in place by the Audit Commission, the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee's annual external accounts have been audited by an external and third party organization (in addition to the annual audit undertaken by ESCC) and these accounts have been assessed against ten control objectives. One of those control objectives was to record and assess significant risks to the achievement of the High Weald JAC objectives and review the adequacy of arrangements to manage the risks.
- 1.2 On the 31st March 2015 the Audit Commission was closed and although there is now no requirement for the external audit, we will continue the biannual report on recording and assessing the significant risks facing the High Weald JAC as this has proven to be of value and is a generally accepted form of 'good practice'.
- 1.3 The key risks to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.4 The JAC is a strong partnership supported by the AONB Unit, a small specialist team providing advice and guidance on the conservation and enhancement of a nationally important landscape. The work of the JAC relies on three things: partnership contributions to the core budget; success raising external funds to the project budget, and retaining/recruiting staff with the appropriate skills and experience to do this work. Given this, the most significant risks to the work of the JAC are constraints on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit.
- 1.5 Members will be aware that since 2010 the AONB Unit has accommodated cuts of £70,000 in the Defra contribution to the core budget but over the same period the

local authority partners on the JAC have worked very hard to maintain the local authority contributions to the core budget, albeit without an increase in line with inflation.

2.0 Key risks 2016/17 and beyond

- 2.1 Although further cuts to the Defra contribution for 2016-2018 were expected to follow the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review and Autumn Statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced towards the end of January 2016 that the funding in real terms for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty partnerships (and National Park authorities) would be protected for the next four years up until 2019/20.
- 2.2 This decision has been warmly welcomed and gives the necessary breathing space to continue to innovate against a backdrop of greater certainty and support and contribute to the role and remit of the local authorities with an interest in the High Weald AONB. However, it should be noted that local authority contributions towards the core business of the JAC will remain under pressure during this period and there remains the risk that the new Chancellor of the Exchequer may at any time choose to revoke the funding settlement for AONB partnerships made by his predecessor in January 2016.

3.0 Risk mitigation

- 3.1 The High Weald AONB Unit's current business strategy (2014-2018) responds to the risks to the work of the JAC caused by the constraints on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit. This strategy is tailored to the local circumstances and specific needs of the High Weald and it covers the first four years of the revised AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019.
- 3.2 Unlike previous business plans, which proposed ambitious work programmes and sought external funds to realize them, the 2014-2018 strategy is informed by the financial cuts since 2010 and the likely budget constraints for the current business strategy period and focuses on maintaining effective delivery of the JAC's core activity. Raising external funds to support the work remains difficult and has become increasingly competitive and the pragmatic approach has been a move during 2015-2016 to a smaller, more resilient core team that is competent across a range of disciplines. However, the AONB Unit needs to retain a capacity for responding positively to opportunities to secure new resources and develop new partnerships to achieve AONB management plan objectives and support the work of others in the AONB.
- 3.3 The development of secure and alternative long-term income streams adequate enough to support the core remit of the JAC may be possible (although the difficulties achieving this are often under-estimated) but they are unlikely to address any shortfall in contributions within the strategy's timescale. The potential for charitable trusts and social enterprise companies to play a role in the future has been considered and will be kept under review but the focus for this business plan period is to remain a local authority supported partnership with a close relationship to government bodies whose policies influence management of the AONB landscape.

- 3.4 During the preparation of the current business strategy a risk assessment was undertaken in 2014 to identify priorities and make further decisions on financial, staff and other resource allocation. Following this, a report considering the impacts of the cuts and options to safeguard the service the JAC provides was presented to and approved by the Management Board in March 2014.
- 3.5 This report has informed and shaped the current business strategy and the AONB Unit has actively pursued a variety of options to address the risk of declining financial and personnel resources. To date the following measures have been put in place:
- A significant reduction in accommodation and office costs;
 - A reduction in ESCC support service costs;
 - A reduction in the communications budget including the loss of the High Weald Anvil magazine;
 - The use of project reserves to support an expanded project programme that encourages financial contributions from new partnerships and organizations;
 - Testing the viability of an AONB consultancy to undertake contract work eg. events management, Good Woods Project, Sussex Walks Festival;
 - Charging for hosting and/or managing self-financing projects;
 - The use of internships to support the core work programme and provide valuable work experience for the successful applicants;
 - Continuing to apply to external sources of funds from private businesses, charitable trusts, government agencies to support community, research, and demonstration projects;
 - Sharing/secondment of staff with partner organizations and other AONB Units and National Park Authorities;
 - Restructuring of the AONB Unit to ensure staff have the appropriate skills and experience to achieve the statutory AONB Management Plan and support the JAC partnership;
 - Narrowing of the scope of the work undertaken by the AONB Unit;

The following will be put in place:

- Consideration of the feasibility of establishing a 'charging policy' for pre-application advice;
- Looking at the opportunities for a closer relationship with the High Weald Landscape Trust (set up by the AONB Unit in 2004);
- Investigating further the opportunities for corporate sponsorship;
- Investigating the opportunities for encouraging philanthropic donations towards the work of the JAC;
- Investigating alternative funds to support the work of the JAC e.g. Corporate Social Responsibility, corporate investment;
- Investigating the viability of setting up a company or social enterprise limited by guarantee (such as High Weald Design, established by the AONB Unit in 1994).

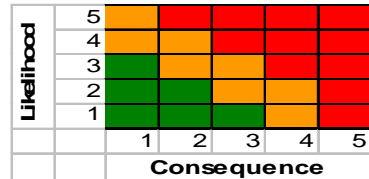
4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1 Risk management systems are in place and conform to the appropriate East Sussex County Council policy.
- 4.2 The years 2017 to 2018 will continue to be characterised by constraints on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit and this remains the most significant risk to the core work of the JAC.
- 4.3 The High Weald AONB Unit's current business strategy (2014-2018) is tailored to the High Weald's local circumstances and specific needs and aims to address the risk to the work of the JAC associated with declining financial contributions to the core work for 2016/17 and beyond.
- 4.4 The business strategy will ensure that by the end of the period the JAC will remain as a strong partnership supported by a small dedicated team providing specialist technical advice to conserve and promote the value of this nationally protected landscape. An appropriate organisational structure has been established to manage self-funded projects supporting AONB Management Plan objectives, and develop income generating activities.

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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	Residual Risk		
				Likelihood	Consequence	Matrix Zone			Control Rating	Likelihood	Consequence
	Format: EVENT leading to CONSEQUENCE resulting in EFFECT ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES						Format: What action; How frequent				
1	Reduced activity/service due to declining budgets 2016/17 and beyond. JAC with a lower 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 affecting Defra and local authorities leading to a further reduction in the JAC's budget.	AONB Director	4	4	Red	Unit to take into account direction of government and local authorities. JAC members and officers involved in and supportive of partnership and able to lobby robustly for funds internally and externally. JAC Chairman, on behalf of partnership, to lobby robustly for maintaining contributions. Alternative sources of core income sought. Options to reduce expenditure e.g. accommodation without adversely affecting on service explored. Planned change in scope of JAC's core work programme.	AONB Director	2	4	Red

2	Unit unable to attract external funding for the implementation or coordination of projects that meet AONB Management Plan objectives.	Public sector cuts resulting in difficulties securing funds to match external grants e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund. Without commitment from 'local' partners bids for external funds are rarely feasible and considered weak by potential donor organizations. Unit objectives do not align with grant-aiding bodies objectives. Increased competition for fewer and smaller grants. Target audiences for grant-aiding bodies do not exist within the High Weald.	AONB Director	4	4	Red	Partnership organizations and others consider identifying funds to ensure local matched funds can be used to attract external grants and allow partnership projects to be developed. Keep a clear understanding of grant-aiding bodies objectives. Unit to take into account direction of grant-aiding bodies. Fundraising expertise within the Unit developed and maintained. Alternative fundraising options explored.	AONB Director	2	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	Amber	Technical advice sought and recommendations/solutions implemented.	AONB Director	3	3	3	Amber
4	Loss of grant aid due to self-financing project outputs not being met.	Project staff seeking and moving to new jobs as the current contract end date approaches. Project objectives not completed, undue workload on the remaining AONB core staff to complete project work. Adverse affect to the AONB core work remit and much reduced capacity and time to raise funds to support core work.	AONB Director	2	2	Green	Support and funding secured for retention bonuses. Longer notice periods for project staff. Projects developed and managed to ensure that the completion of key/complex outputs are not planned for the end of the contract. Flexibility built into core staff work programmes in order that there is a capacity to finish self-financing projects if required.	AONB Director	2	2	2	Green
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 affecting the AONB.	AONB Director	4	4	Red	Continue the close liaison with SEEPL 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	3	3	Amber
6	Future possibility that what is being implemented and coordinated by the AONB Partnership is not valued by Defra due to the loss of the dedicated Landscape Policy Unit within Defra. National Election and/or 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	3	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. Active engagement of High Weald AONB Patrons and supportive High Weald MPs.	AONB Director	2	3	5	Red