

High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee



Agenda

Wednesday 28 March 2018 at 10.30am

Dale Hill Golf Club, Dale Hill Suite, Ticehurst, Wadhurst TN5 7DQ

1. Apologies

2. Members' Interests

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

3. Urgent matters

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

4. Participative consultation of Management Plan Review

To participate in a group exercise exploring what conservation of 'Natural Beauty' means for the High Weald in light of Defra 25 year Environment Plan

5. Management Plan Review: Draft Consultation

To consider the draft AONB Management Plan 2019 -2024 for public consultation in Summer 2018 and to approve the recommendations set out in the report AONB Management Plan 2019 Review: Consultation Draft (page 3). Appendix 1: AONB Management Plan timetable (page 6); Appendix 2: summary of supporting papers (page7). Draft AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 appended separate to the agenda and reports.

6. Minutes of the JAC meeting

To consider the minutes of the last meeting of the JAC held on 8 November 2017 (page 9)

7. Minutes of the Management Board Meeting

To note the matters arising from the Management Board meeting held on 7 March 2018 (page 16)

8. Minutes of the Officer Steering Group

To note the minutes of the last meeting of the OSG held on 19 March 2018 (page 23) and receive a verbal report from the OSG Chairman on the matters arising from the meeting

9. Looking Back Looking Forward presentation

To note a presentation from the AONB Business Manager on the work plan of the Unit during 2017/2018.

10. Revenue Budget 2017/2018 and Business Plan 2018/19

To consider a report by the Treasurer on the Revenue Budget 2017/2018 and Business Plan 2018/19 (page 30) Appendix A: Forecast outturn for budget 2017/18 and Appendix B: Self-Funding Projects outturn 2017/18 and indicative budget 2018/19

11. National Planning Policy Framework Review

To consider a verbal report by the AONB Planning Adviser on the key changes to the National Planning Policy Framework Review

12. AONB Design Guidance update

To consider a report by the AONB Planning Adviser on the revised timetable for the AONB Design Guide (page 33) Design Guidance Timetable (page35)

13. Risk Management

To consider a report by the AONB Co-Director on risk management (page 36); Appendix A: High Weald JAC - Key Risks

14. Any other business

Management Board Meeting – May 2018

Next Joint Advisory Committee Meeting – November 2018

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

Agenda Item: 5

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 28 March 2018

Title of Report: AONB Management Plan 2019 Review: Consultation Draft

By: AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

1. Approve the Management Plan Consultation Draft for public consultation subject to agreement on minor text changes described in para. 2.5 of this report.
 2. Agree the Plan timetable as set out in Appendix 1.
 3. Delegate to the Management Board responsibility to arbitrate on any outstanding matters arising from further partner discussions of the issues detailed in para. 2.5 of this report
 4. Delegate to Management Board responsibility to approve the final Consultation draft in a timely fashion to allow public consultation to proceed according to the agreed timetable.
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1. Background

- 1.1 The AONB Management Plan review was initiated in November 2016 by the JAC with a timetable setting out key decision points through to publication in March 2019 as required by CROW Act 2000. Further JAC meetings on 29th March and 8th November 2017 discussed and approved the scope of the review with preference for a 'light touch' review with minimum change to objectives but recognising that, in view the challenging nature of current issues and opportunities, a more substantive review of some sections may be advisable.
- 1.2 The changes proposed and agreed include expansion of the character statements with a page of sub- or key-characteristics to reflect the extensive evidence developed since the last Plan; specific focus on farms and land based activities; a refreshed Public Understanding and Enjoyment section focusing on perceptual qualities, and a revision of the AONB policy section to ensure national consistency of approach and counter the loss of historic AONB information from gov.uk.; the latter provided in the form of agreed national text from the NAAONB tailored to the High Weald.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 A series of technical workshops based around the key components of natural beauty were held in summer 2017 with outputs analysed and included in a Consultation Report which will accompany the revised Plan. The results contributed to the revised 'Top five issues', Key characteristics and 'Priority Actions'. Early public engagement was developed through an on-line questionnaire promoted to AONB contacts and via social media. Nearly 400 people completed the questionnaire and analysis of their responses has helped shape the list of other qualities (included in the revised Public Understanding and Enjoyment Section) and the ambitions of the Plan (currently listed under Priority Actions). The report of the public engagement exercise is available at www.highweald.org.

- 2.2 Work has also been progressing on supporting documents required to be produced as part of the Review including:
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment
 - Equality Impact Assessment Screening Report
 - Monitoring the Condition of the AONB and the Performance of the AONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019,
 - Engagement and Consultation Report
 - A profile of the AONB in figures

Drafts of the first four reports are available from claire.testner@highweald.org

- 2.3 Drafting of the revised Plan text was initiated in December 2017 with the first draft of the first section circulated to OSG members on 22nd January 2018 and a full draft circulated on 13th February to both the OSG and Management Board. The OSG meeting planned for 28th February to discuss the draft unfortunately coincided with particularly bad weather and had to be cancelled. Detailed comments were received from 8 out of the 15 partner local authorities with several requesting a delay to the Review timetable in the light of the authorities' heavy workload.
- 2.4 Management Board at their meeting on 7th March considered officer comments and the request to delay the Review timetable. Pressure on officers was understood and appreciated, but the need to schedule the public consultation before the summer break was also recognised. Members agreed that the next stage of the Review process should proceed as far as possible as planned and requested a spreadsheet of officer comments with the AONB Director's responses.
- 2.5 The spreadsheet of comments and a revised Plan, identifying changes agreed, were circulated to officers and the postponed OSG meeting went ahead on 19th March. Detailed comments received from a further 4 authorities were discussed at the meeting. Seven officers attended the meeting, the other 8 officers had either submitted comments that had been accommodated and agreed or were happy for their interests to be represented by those officers attending. The meeting considered each comment in turn.
- General comments about the scope of the changes, amendments to the Public Understanding and Enjoyment section, and introduction of new land based economy section were discussed and agreed.
 - General comments about the changes to the 5 year targets/ Priority Actions were discussed and it was agreed to change the title of these to 'Aims and actions'.
 - General comments about the changes to the Indicators of Success were discussed and the approach agreed.
 - All detailed comments were discussed and an approach agreed. At the end of the meeting no fundamental issues were left outstanding but the final wording for some minor sections required further consideration subsequent to the meeting: (i) a list of public bodies (page 8), (ii) Revised wording for two paragraphs - key issues for settlement and Land-based economy – provided by Rother DC, (iii) minor revisions to the Settlement key characteristics. The revised text proposed for these sections is highlighted in yellow in the attached Consultation Draft.

- OSG members stressed the value of face to face discussions about the draft text to ensure they could prepare supportive papers for Plan adoption when the time came. A further OSG meeting was suggested and welcomed by some officers, with others happy to proceed by email.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 All major changes and the majority of the Draft Plan have been agreed by officers. Some officers would welcome the opportunity to reflect on the changes, including those the meeting ran out of time to discuss (highlighted in yellow). The Review timetable would allow for the possibility of a further OSG meeting in April/ May.
- 6.2 Members are asked to approve the following recommendations:
- Approve the Management Plan Consultation Draft for public consultation subject to agreement on minor text changes described in para. 2.5 of this report.
 - Agree the Plan timetable as set out in Appendix 1.
 - Delegate to the Management Board responsibility to arbitrate on any outstanding matters arising from further partner discussions of the issues detailed in para. 2.5 of this report
 - Delegate to Management Board responsibility to approve the final Consultation draft in a timely fashion to allow public consultation to proceed according to the agreed timetable.

Sally Marsh, AONB Co-Director (s.marsh@highweald.org)

High Weald AONB Management Plan Review 2019 Timetable

Dec 2016	Scoping review
Feb 2017	Issues & principles report presented to OSG
Mar 2017	Scope of review approved by MB & JAC
Apr 2017	Statutory consultees alerted
May 2017	Expert engagement
July 2017	Public engagement
July 2017	Performance and Condition Monitoring
Nov 2017	Progress report to JAC
Feb 2018	Consultation draft produced
Feb-March 2018	Consultation draft discussed by MB and OSG
Mar 2018	Consultation draft agreed by JAC
June-July 2018	Public consultation on draft Management Plan
August 2018	Amendments and modifications
Sep-Oct 2018	Final Plan discussed by OSG & MB
Nov 2018	Final Plan agreed by Joint Advisory Committee
Dec-Feb 2018/9	Local Authority adoption processes
Mar 2019	Plan sent to Secretary of State
May 2019 onwards	Dissemination and promotion of Plan

High Weald AONB Management Plan Review 2019-2024

Summary of Supporting Papers

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Consultation on the scoping report for the SEA took place between 26th April and 31st May 2017 and comments received from that consultation informed the environmental report. Objectives were taken from the SEA of the previous Management Plan with some slight variation in wording as recommended by Natural England at the scoping stage. These objectives were then used to assess the proposed objectives in the draft Management Plan against their reasonable alternatives. At this stage these alternatives include not having an objective on the subject area and the original wording of the objective where this is proposed to be changed.

In all cases the SEA concludes that the proposed objectives in the Management Plan Review have the most positive environmental effects compared to their reasonable alternatives. In considering cumulative impacts and mitigation, the following conclusions were drawn:

W4	To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets (wording unchanged from existing Management Plan).	Mitigation for potential adverse effects provided by guidance from the AONB Unit on woodland management that does not damage archaeology or ecological assets of woodland.
FH1	To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management (wording unchanged from existing Management Plan).	Mitigation for potential adverse effects provided by guidance from the AONB Unit on agricultural land management practices that protect and enhance habitats, water systems and soils. Colour and design guidance can mitigate impact of new buildings.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The European Union has designated a group of protected sites, known as the Natura 2000 network, for their exceptionally important (rare, endangered or vulnerable) species and/or habitats. Sites within or close to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are:

- Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Dungerness to Pett Levels Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Hastings Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar (SAC and Ramsar).

A Stage 1 (screening) assessment was carried out. This includes:

- 1) Determination of whether the AONB Management Plan is directly connected or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 sites;
- 2) Description of the AONB Management Plan;
- 3) Characteristics of the Natura 2000 sites; and
- 4) Assessment of the significance of any effects.

The assessment concludes that the AONB Management Plan is not directly connected or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 sites.

The Management Plan was considered in combination with the following plans:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Local Plans for the local authority areas within the AONB;
- Local Transport Plans for East and West Sussex, Kent and Surrey; and
- Environment Agency River Catchment Flood Management Plans.

The Management Plan does not determine the amount or location of development but rather sets objectives that should be taken into account by those taking decisions that affect the AONB. Since these objectives are intended to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, provided the objectives themselves do not conflict with the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites, then the Management Plan will not have a significant effect on these sites.

This assessment is set out in a matrix. This showed that:

- 12 Management Plan objectives are unrelated to the conservation objectives of the European sites and therefore not applicable or have no effect;
- 5 Management Plan objectives positively reinforce the conservation objectives of the European sites; and
- 6 Management Plan objectives have potential conflicts or uncertain effects on the conservation objectives of the European Sites.

The Management Plan objectives with potential conflicts or uncertain effects on the conservation objectives of the European Sites were then considered further and measures proposed to avoid or mitigate these potential adverse effects.

The assessment concludes that the proposed changes to the Management Plan will not result in a significant effect on the integrity of the European sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. There is therefore no requirement to carry out a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been carried out using the East Sussex County Council standard template. This concludes that the High Weald AONB Management Plan Review 2019-2024 complies with equalities legislation, including the duty to promote race, disability and gender equality. This assessment will be revisited before the Management Plan is finalised in the light of any relevant consultation responses.

High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting



Held at 10.30am on Wednesday 7 November

Ashburnham Place, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9NF

Members present:

Mrs J Davison	Sevenoaks District Council, Chairman
Cllr Mrs S Tidy	East Sussex County Council
Cllr B Kentfield	Rother District Council, Vice Chairman
Cllr M Payne	Kent County Council
Cllr Mrs R Moore	Wealden District Council
Cllr Mrs J Soyke	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Cllr A Pickering	Ashford Borough Council
Cllr B Acraman	West Sussex County Council
Cllr R Street	Hastings Borough Council
Mrs A Field	Forestry Commission

Officers present:

Mrs S Marsh	AONB Co-Director, High Weald AONB Unit
Ms G Sherwin	AONB Business Manager, High Weald AONB Unit
Ms C Tester	AONB Planning Adviser, High Weald AONB Unit
Mr A Fowler	Finance Manager, East Sussex County Council
Mr T Dyer	Team Manager, Environment and Heritage, West Sussex County Council
Mr D Greenwood	Partnership Manager, Surrey County Council
Ms J Hollingum	Planning Officer, Mid Sussex District Council
Mr M Davidson	Environmental and Natural Resources Manager, Hastings Borough Council

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the following Members and officers:
Cllr C Hersey, Cllr M Balfour, Cllr H Rogers, Mr D Scully, Mrs H French, Cllr A Lee, Cllr A Irvin,
Mr J Lavender, Cllr L Steeds, Cllr L Lockwood

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- 2.2 It was noted that Cllr M Payne informed the Members that he was currently participating in the High Weald AONB Upper Rother and Dudwell Countryside Stewardship Group.
- 2.3 Mrs Jill Davison opened the meeting and thanked the Committee Members and the Unit for their support during her term as Chairman.

3. URGENT MATTERS

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

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND MANAGEMENT BOARD MEMBERS FOR NOVEMBER 2017-2019**

The Chairman passed over to Samantha Nicholas, Clerk to the JAC, to confirm the election of the Management Board Members as follows.

4.1 RESOLVED to note that the following Members have been elected for Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Management Board:

Elected Chairman: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Tidy

Proposed by Cllr Matthew Balfour; seconded by Cllr B Kentfield

Elected Vice-Chairman Cllr Mr B Kentfield

Proposed by Mrs J Davison; seconded by Cllr S Tidy

Elected Management Board Member: Mrs Jill Davison

Proposed & seconded by Management Board

Elected Management Board Member: Cllr M Balfour

Proposed by Mrs J Davison; seconded by Cllr C Hersey

Elected Management Board Member: Cllr R Moore

Proposed by Mrs J Davison; seconded by Cllr M Balfour

Elected Management Board Member: Cllr B Acraman

Proposed by Cllr Mrs S Tidy; seconded by Cllr C Hersey

Elected Management Board Member: Cllr C Hersey

Proposed by Mrs J Davison; seconded by Cllr B Kentfield

Elected Management Board Member:

Position open

4.3 It was noted that Mrs Jill Davison will remain as a community co-optee on the Management Board as a non-voting Member.

4.4 Cllr Mrs Sylvia Tidy as the newly elected Madam Chairman took control of the meeting. Cllr Tidy warmly thanked Mrs Jill Davidson for all her work and support as Chairman and for Cllr Brian Kentfield continued support in his role as Vice-Chairman.

4.5 There is still a position open on the Management Board and all Members that are currently no elected were encouraged to apply for this position at any point during this term on the Committee.

5. **MINUTES OF THE JAC MEETING – 29 March 2017**

5.1 **MATTERS ARISING**

5.2 Sally Marsh updated the Members on point 1.1, that Jeremy Lake was in the process of producing a Historic Routeways research paper, which will give the technical guidance to underpin the High Weald Management Plan review.

5.3 9.3, There has been significant increase in number and size of planning applications within the AONB. Claire Tester explained that the National Association of AONBs in partnership

with CPRE will be launching an evidence based report on 15 November 2017 which will show the increase in applications, especially in the AONBs within the South East of England.

- 5.4 Claire Tester also informed the Members of a new methodology to calculate local housing need, which would give an overall estimate of housing need at 266,000 homes per year in England. However, this methodology incorporates a multiplier on affordability: the ratio of median house price to median income. This methodology will lead to local authorities within the South East having vastly inflated local housing needs targets. Due there being no correlation between increased housing numbers built and housing price reduction the AONBs have consulted on removal of this element due to its detrimental impact on AONBs. The consultation will close on Thursday 9 November 2017.
- 5.5 Sally Marsh reminded the members of the issues with the new gov.uk website formed by amalgamating websites from government agencies and departments. Vital policy documents underpinning the AONBs' designation have been removed and are not easily accessible without a freedom of information request. This process is cumbersome and the loss of access to this information has wide ranging implications for the future of AONBs.
- 5.6 Sally Marsh updated the Members on the response to the letter to Defra and Natural England explaining the concerns they have over these vital policy documents not being readily available. This letter was sent out on behalf of the Members and sent to all Members of Parliament (MPs) in the AONB. The responses received suggest that Natural England will take a view of the material that they can be made readily available. In the interim period the National Association of AONBs are looking to hold this information on their central website with links to the gov.uk website.
- 5.7 Alison Field, Forestry Commission, confirmed that they also have similar issues and are looking at charitable trusts to potentially hold the interpretation documents which underpin the final policies and procedure reports.
- 5.8 10.11, Brexit and Defra's potential move towards a Natural Capital approach will be discussed further at the AONB's Chairman meeting with a focus on how the AONBs can build in this approach. There is also potential for AONBs to support the management of agri-environmental payment schemes post Brexit.

5.2 RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting of 29 March 2017 as a correct record.

6. **MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD – 4 October 2017**

- 6.1 Sally Marsh highlighted to the Members pt. 26, the Public Consultation Survey questionnaire link, which has been circulated to Members and officers, will close at the end of the November 2017. The Unit has had over 300 responses to the Public consultation questionnaire. This survey seeks to explore what aspects of the High Weald residents find particularly beautiful and how they enjoy the area and will be fed into the Management Plan review.

- 6.2 RESOLVED to note the minutes of the Management Board held on 4 October 2017 as a correct record.

7. MINUTES OF THE OFFICER STEERING GROUP – 27 September 2017

- 7.1 The Committee considered a verbal report on the Officer Steering Group (OSG) by the OSG Vice-Chairman, Jennifer Hollingum.
- 7.2 The Environmental Colour Assessment Guidance training took place on 5 and 6 October 2017. These were well attended by officers by the majority of the local authorities. The guidance has been placed on the AONB website and circulated for officers and developers to download (<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/2058-high-weald-aonb-colour-study/file.html>).
- 7.3 Design South East has been commissioned to develop a High Weald Design Guidance based on the 'Build for Life' themes looking at all key aspects of design guidance relevant to the AONB. The consultants had a positive briefing session in July with guidelines to look at a broad spectrum of design principles. The consultants will present example questions to the Design Sub-group at the end of November. The design guidance is to be developed from October 2017 to February 2018 and to start the public consultation process from May to June 2018.
- 7.5 Mid Sussex District Council are piloting a bespoke training session with the aim to improve the planning officers AONB knowledge. This will be facilitated by Sally Marsh and Claire Tester. The training will look at how to apply the Management Plan and character component data to a small settlement example. Sally Marsh also offered similar training sessions for the Members.
- 7.7 David Greenwood requested that the minutes reflect that at pt. 10.2 LEADER funding is still available but the programme timing is being shortened, and applicants should check with their local Kent, Surrey or Sussex LEADER group. David also confirmed that the wood-processing project at Balcombe is one of many projects that have been supported by the LEADER funding programme.
- 7.6 Madam Chairman welcomed David Greenwood, OSG Chairman and Jennifer Hollingum, Vice-Chairman who will be taking over from David Marlow and Virginia Pullan. Cllr Tidy asked Cllr Kentfield to pass on the Members thanks to David Marlow for his dedicated work with the Officer Steering Group.
- 7.4 RESOLVED to note:
- The Minutes of the Officer Steering Group held on 27 September 2017 as a correct record.

8. REVENUE BUDGET 2017/2018

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report by Finance Manager, Andy Fowler who presented the to consider the draft Revenue Budget 2018/19 and agree it as a basis for consultation with contributing bodies

- 8.2 The forecast outturn for 2017/18 is to break-even. The forecast reserves remain strong at 31 March 2018 are £125,000.
- 8.4 The draft budget shows contributions from local authorities at the same level as 2017/18 and the Defra contribution at the same level as 2017/18 with an inflationary increase of £4,549.
- 8.5 The indicative budget reflects the Committee's role in managing non-government grants landscape enhancements on behalf of Sussex Lund and National Grid. At the Management Board meeting of 29 June 2017 grant awards of £321,305 were approved.
- 8.6 The 2019/2020 budget is seen to more challenging as local authorities budgets are coming under more pressure and the uncertainty of Defra core funding may be an issue from March 2019.
- 8.6 Cllr M Payne commented that pt. 2.6 of the report did not correspond with the tables figures of AONB's annual budget in 2019/20. Andy Fowler confirmed that the reports figures were correct and the table would be updated to reflect this.
- 8.7 A discussion took place on how the accounts might best reflect the Sussex Lund and National Grid projects, as forecasting grants outcome was difficult to predict, especially as the Unit has been managing the process for less than a year.
- 8.8 It was noted that the Unit with ESCC finance would look at this particular issue and introduce further information in the report to reflect the grant mechanism.
- 8.9 RESOLVED to note the report and:
 - (1) approve the Draft Revenue Budget for 2017/18.
 - (2) commence budget consultation with the local authorities and Defra.

9. MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW TIMETABLE

- 9.1 The JAC considered a report by Sally Marsh, AONB Co-Director on the progress report for the AONB Management Plan Review 2017.
- 9.2 Sally Marsh informed the Members that the responsibility for delivering the 2019 review programme was placed in the hands of the Landscape Advisor Charles Winchester, but with his departure, the Unit has had to revise this approach. In order to meet the review timetable a decision has been made not to fill the post in the short term but for the AONB Director to lead on the review with support from the Planning Advisor. However, the Unit still anticipates meeting key milestones. The scope of the review will need to be contained in view of the reduced staff resources but this remains consistent with the JAC decision to support a light touch review.
- 9.3 Sally Marsh took the Members through the key schedule of changes. There will be an introduction of AONB standard policy page putting into context 'Natural Beauty' and the

National Parks and AONBs future challenges. The Ministerial foreword has been agreed to be supplied by The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP for the AONB family.

- 9.4 There will also be expanded character component statements which were reviewed as part of the consultation meetings, held in May, and encouraged by the officers as they will help support planning appeals by laying out more detailed information on each of the five character components: Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate.
- 9.5 There will be an update of data evidence gathered over the past 10 years and targets will be reduced to reflect the pressure on the local authorities in terms of budget and staffing levels.
- 9.6 The draft Management Plan should be ready for March 2018 to go to public consultation during the summer and adoption by the 15 local authorities during the Autumn.
- 9.7 Cllr Payne confirmed that this timing would work well for the internal local authorities budgetary sign off process.
- 9.8 RESOLVED to approve the following recommendations:
- To support the principle of a light touch review
 - To support allocation of AONB staff and resources to the review
 - To support the scope of the review as set out in the paragraph 6.1 of the committee report
 - To agree the SEA scoping paper.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND STAFF UPDATE

- 10.1 The JAC considered a report by Jason Lavender on risk management and staffing updates and the associated risk management matrix.
- 10.2 Sally Marsh, on behalf of Jason Lavender, reported to the Members the main areas that may impact on the Unit's performance. Sally Marsh reminded the Members that the AONBs had absorbed significant cuts over the past years. Although Defra funding has been offered until March 2020, it is potentially only secure until March 2019. The Unit has continued to increase its distribution of workload but the greatest risk is the loss of staff and their skills to the Unit.
- 10.3 This risk has increased in Charles Winchester leaving the Unit to work as a ranger for South Downs National Park. This role will not be filled until after the Management Plan review has been completed. Matt Pitts also resigned his position as Landscape Community Advisor in June to take a new position with Kent County Council as a Landscape Advisor on chalk grassland.
- 10.4 However the loss of these staff has allowed the Unit to recruit Ross Wingfield in September 2017 as Land Management Advisor. Ross used to work for the National Trust at the Scotney Castle Estates and has local knowledge of the AONB as well as having a solid knowledge in land management. Christine Meadows has also joined the Unit, in a part-time capacity,

working alongside Ross Wingfield. Christine has experience in the management and restoration of ancient woodlands.

- 10.4 Iain Parkinson joined the Unit in October 2017 on a year's secondment from Kew Royal Botanic Gardens. He will be focussing on species-rich grassland and setting up a Meadows group. Eleanor Wilding has been working as a GIS intern over the summer period and will remain with the Unit until March 2018 in a part-time capacity.
- 10.5 Madam Chairman thanked Matt Pitts and Charles Winchester for their long standing work with the Unit.
- 10.6 Cllr M Payne informed the Members that Defra has secured payments to Landowners until 2022 and there is more focus on rebalancing funding for research and development.
- 10.6 RESOLVED to note the reports and request that the Management Board continue to meet to review significant risks as required and develop options for their management.

11. AOB

- 11.1 Gerry Sherwin presented the Annual Review 2016/17 and confirmed that officers would receive a link to the annual review on the AONB website for them to distribute within their own local authority. A discussion took place on the best way for the Annual Review to be circulated and it was confirmed that the Members gave a clear steer that hard copies of the Annual Review should be sent to the Leader, Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and absent Members as well as circulated electronically.
- 11.2 Alison Field informed the Members that Defra is working with the Natural Capital Committee to develop a comprehensive 25-year plan for the environment. This will bring together business, environmental non-governmental organisations and others to deliver improvements to the environment, harnessing people's enthusiasm and connecting people with nature. This plan is moving towards completion and will have implications on how future Management Plans may be structured in the future.
- 11.3 The date for the next Joint Advisory in March 2017 is to be decided.
- 12. COMMUNITY LED HOUSING PRESENTATION - TOM WARDER, ACTION IN RURAL SUSSEX - presentation appended
- 12.1 Cllr R Moore asked whether communities would be better concentrating on Community Land Trusts (CLTs) instead of Neighbourhood Plans. Tom Warder explained that often these processes can work better in parallel and the information learnt from CLTs experience can be filtered into the Neighbourhood Planning guidance.
- 12.2 Cllr J Soyke asked whether this advice could also be sort from the Kent team. Tom Warder confirmed that Tessa Sullivan is the main point of contact and funding has been provided towards supporting the hub communication centre.
- 12.3 There are currently two locations in the AONB which have community led housing projects in process, Icklesham and Slaugham.

**HIGH WEALD JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Management Board
Minutes – 10.30am, 7 March 2018, Acorn Tourism, Woodland Enterprise
Centre, Hastings Road, East Sussex, TN5 7PR.**



Samantha Nicholas
Clerk to the High Weald AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

Present: Members:
 Cllr Mrs Sylvia Tidy East Sussex County Council (Chairman)
 Cllr Brian Kentfield Rother District Council (Vice-chairman)
 Mrs Jill Davison Sevenoaks District Council
 Cllr M Balfour Kent County Council
 Cllr Mrs Rowena Moore Weald District Council

Also Present:
 Sally Marsh AONB Director (job share)
 Jason Lavender AONB Director (job share)
 Claire Tester AONB Planning Advisor
 Gerry Sherwin AONB Business Manager
 David Greenwood OSG Chairman, Surrey County Council

Apologies

1. The following persons gave their apologies for absence:
Cllr Bill Acraman and Cllr C Hersey

Members' Interests

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

Minutes of the Management Board meeting held on 4 October 2017

3. The minutes of the last meeting, held on 4 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes

4. There were no matters arising from the minutes held on 4 October 2017.

Management Plan review update following Officer Steering Group (OSG) Meeting

5. Sally Marsh informed the Members that due to the bad weather the OSG meeting has been postponed and will be re-scheduled for 19 May 2018 at 2pm.
6. Sally Marsh took the Members through the Management process review to date as Cllr Kentfield was concerned that the review was more than a light touch. The changes in timing of the OSG meeting might impact on the draft document being available for approval at the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) to be held on 28 March 2018. Sally Marsh confirmed that the OSG officers had received the first section of the changes to the AONB Management

Plan five weeks prior the original meeting date of the 28 February 2018. The second section was sent two weeks prior to the meeting date.

7. Sally Marsh reminded the Members that on 29 March 2017 the AONB Joint Advisory Committee approved the 'light touch' review and a set of recommendations within the AONB Management Plan Review 2017: Progress and issues report. This report indicated that there may be substantive issues the AONB Management Plan review would be required to address leading to a more in-depth review for these issues.
8. The Members were informed that the objectives have remained, in the majority, the same which is a substantive part of the AONB Management Plan.
9. After the Pashley Road Appeal in 2016 ,in response to the Rother District Council officers, it was agreed that more detailed character component characteristic summaries would be provided within the AONB Management Plan. The style of these is based on Natural England's National Character Area profiles, and was consulted on at the internal consultations held in May 2017. The greater detail provided will support future policy reviews and help to support the appeal process.
10. As part of the report the Members also agreed to include additional information which might tailor any Agri-environmental proposals to the needs of the High Weald, an approach supported by Defra.
11. Sally Marsh confirmed that the feedback that had been received by the majority of officers would be agreed upon at the OSG meeting and the feedback from several of the officers was largely focussed on the 'AONB character Settlement' chapter. The Unit is awaiting feedback from some officers but in the Director's opinion all the issues to date can be accommodated and none of the issues arising are major items which might substantially delay the review timetable.
12. In March 2017 the AONB Joint Advisory Committee requested the Unit wrote to Defra to draw to their attention the loss from the public domain of critical AONB policy information due the changes to the GOV.uk website. To mitigate for this loss of access to vital policy information the National Association of AONBs have produced standard text to go into all AONB Plans. This will give an even approach for all AONB Management Plans nationally. The Members were informed that none of the local authorities have given negative feedback on this section.
13. Sally Marsh explained to the Members that the area of most concern to officers was the changes to the action list. The officers main concerns were these actions would put pressure on local authority resources. As part of the review the AONB Joint Advisory Committee had already agreed that the actions should be ambitions only as all local authorities are under considerable resource pressures. The actions have therefore been reduced and streamlined.
14. The Unit is keen to have an open discussion with the OSG officers on these priority actions and to ensure they are worded correctly. The Unit will also clarify to the officers that the priority actions are not to be represented as a resource burden for local authorities. Sally Marsh explained that these actions are often directed at other public bodies such as Defra and Natural England and sometimes these lines are blurred. Sally Marsh confirmed that as a 'community' our ambitions are to meet these actions and it is not designed to pressurise local authorities to put resources behind specific actions.
15. The question has been raised by the officers as why the Public Understanding and Engagement section of the AONB Management Plan has been changed to Community life and

a land based economy and Cultural features and associations. Sally Marsh explained that this is in-line with Defra's strong direction within the context of the 25 year Environment Plan. The AONB's core purpose is 'Natural Beauty' unlike Conservation Boards which have a duty to public engagement. The 25 year Plan also indicated that AONBs will be under review. Sally Marsh presented at a Defra meeting how AONBs might be able to engage with land-base businesses supporting rural development for Agri-environment schemes.

16. Sally Marsh went through the time scale and issues for delaying the AONB Management Plan review process. The Members were reminded that due to the large number of local authorities it is imperative they have 3-4 months to take the Management Plan through their internal processes prior to publication in March 2019. The vacant Landscape Advisor post is also putting pressure on staff resources at the AONB Unit. Therefore, the latest the public consultation might be able to go out is May 2018, closing end of July. Timescale chart appended.
17. Sally Marsh proposed that the AONB Management Board could, if required, arbitrate on any outstanding issues and sign off further amendments after the draft had been presented to the JAC on 28 March 2018. However, the Director felt confident that the majority of issues the officers have raised can be agreed at the OSG meeting 19 March 2018.
18. Cllr S Tidy commented that the AONB JAC has a much wider remit than planning and it was imperative that the Plan be designed to support Agri-environment advice for rural industry as part of the Plan review.
19. Jill Davison enquired whether the review of the National Planning Framework would impact on the Management Plan review. Claire Tester informed the Members that this would not be the case, however, a report will be sent to the Members of the key changes to the Framework for the AONB JAC Meeting on 28 March 2018.
20. Sally Marsh informed the Members that the Public Engagement Survey would be available on the website and a link will be sent to the JAC Members. The survey had a good response and positive headline statements for continuing support towards legislation and increased funding for the AONBs.
21. **The Members of the AONB Management Board agreed that the next stage of the Management Plan review should not be postponed and the spreadsheet of officers' comments to be circulated to the Management Board Members when completed.**

Design Guidance update

22. Claire Tester informed the Members that a sub-group of the OSG has been involved with supporting the consultants, Design South East, in producing a draft High Weald AONB Design Guidance. The intention was to bring the draft document to JAC Meeting in March but this will be delayed due to the AONB Management Plan review taking priority. The sub-group has also had to impart to the consultants a large amount of information on the AONB key characteristics. This process has also been supported by the assistance of Dr Bannister. The design sub-group will be meeting on 18 April to take comments back to Design South East to produce a draft guidance document to be available at the next Management Board Meeting in May or June 2018.
23. Cllr Tidy agreed that this was an important piece of work and it was far better to get the correct level of detailed approach and therefore take more time for its completion.

Work Plan

24. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that she would be presenting 'Looking Back Looking Forward' - Annual Review presentation at the AONB JAC meeting. Gerry highlighted to the Members the Unit's new work plan to date.
25. The Land Management Initiative is progressing very positively and to date the unit will be running 15 events targeted at landowners. One of the Farm Cluster's core directives is management of deer across the AONB. In response to this the Unit are holding a Deer Stalking workshop arranged for the end of May 2018 in partnership with Natural England and the Deer Initiative. This workshop is aimed at deer stalkers and their associated landowners.
26. Cllr Balfour commented that it is important to also look at the food chain for the deer carcasses to increase venison consumption. Cllr Moore enquired whether we could put information on the AONB website for consumers to find local producers. Gerry Sherwin agreed that all this areas will be considered but the initial priority was to secure a robust network of stalkers across the AONB.
27. The High Weald Walking Festival www.highwealdwalks.org has been launched in collaboration with a number of branches of The Ramblers across the AONB. The Festival is running from 15 to 23 September 2018. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that the Unit has experienced a very positive working partnership with The Ramblers. The budget is only £1000 to ensure that the Festival can remain sustainable. There will be a variety of led walks from The Ramblers, local nature reserve advisers and the AONB staff, for all different levels of walker's abilities.
28. Cllr Balfour suggested that the Unit might want to contact the Kent Downs who have a Green Tourism strategy to support future publicity.
29. Gerry Sherwin also confirmed that the Unit will continue to administrate the Sussex Lund grants programme for 2018. Sussex Lund has also enabled the Unit to pro-actively work with new community groups and landowners. The applicants have either received land management site visits or in-depth phone advice ensuring the projects, that are successful, will lead to better AONB outcomes. There is also an enhanced communication programme to ensure that the vision of the Fund to 'inspire others' is met.
30. The Unit will also be placing an expression of interest for two more projects under the National Grid funding scheme. This follows the success of the initial Hedge Restoration Project.

Service Level Agreement

31. Jason Lavender confirmed that following the Memorandum of Understanding the Officer Steering Group had produced a Service Level Agreement running from 2014 to 2019 in-line with the current AONB Management Plan. The Unit are seeking agreement from the Members to update this agreement for a five year period covering the new AONB Management Plan period. This will be discussed further at the OSG meeting.
32. **The Members agreed that the Unit should implement the renewal process through the Officer Steering Group.**

National Association of AONB's update

33. Sally Marsh informed the Members that the Unit pays a subscription to the National Association of AONBs which supports three FTE's. The majority of their time is spent working with Defra on various committees. Their work has directly influenced the direction of the 25 year Environmental Plan. They have also been focussing on post Brexit Agri-environmental review. A role in this area for AONBs is being tested through a pilot scheme which some AONB partnerships such as Kent Downs are keen to participate in. There may be an opportunity for the High Weald AONB to be involved with a pilot.
34. Cllr Tidy asked whether 'conservation boards' may be treated differently post Brexit to the current organisation structure of Joint Advisory Committee. A general discussion took place around this subject. Sally Marsh informed the Members that Daniel Jones, Defra, had visited the Unit to discuss issues beyond countryside stewardship and gain a better understanding of AONBs capabilities. Cllr Balfour commented that JAC is a servant of the local authorities which is different from the National Park structure. Jason Lavender also voiced that the strength of the JAC structure was that the Unit can be far more responsive to the local authority's requirements. National Conference is to be held on 24/25/26 July through the Kent Downs AONB with the main days to be held at Canterbury University. Sally Marsh invited Members to come along if they are able. Full details will be sent when they are available on-line.
35. Cllr Balfour informed the Members of an Ash dieback conference. This disease has had a devastating impact on Kent's woodlands and is slowly moving into the Kent areas of the AONB. The date will be circulated to Members when released.

Defra 25 Year Environmental Plan

36. Jason Lavender informed that Members that there is a summary paper: at a glance of the targets of the 25 year Environmental Plan. This includes a key area of Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment which is driving force of the AONB review.
37. Jason confirmed that the Unit will also be consulting on Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit.
38. As part of the meeting with Defra, Gerry Sherwin produced an internal briefing paper: Beyond Countryside Stewardship. It was agreed that this would be circulated to Management Board Members.
39. A discussion took place on the concerns of moving too far away from farming and the importance of having rural industry defined in the AONB Management Plan. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that she attended the Heritage Lottery Fund strategic framework. This had highlighted the lack of understanding of the importance of engaging with landowners as a community, leading to fewer successful applications through HLF process.

Budget update

40. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that there were no issues with the formal consultation on the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee Draft Budget 2017/18, which is managed by East Sussex County Council. Most local authorities have engaged with the process but they are still waiting from a couple of authorities to respond due to their internal processes.

41. The Members were informed that an external organisation had approached East Sussex CC informing them that the Unit may be eligible for rate rebates. East Sussex agreed to use this service and the result is the Unit has received a rebate of £5,500 for the past 4 years which was received in February 2018.
42. It was clarified that Sussex Lund is in line with the forecasted payments set in September 2017. In contrast the National Grid project will have no claims processed by the end of March 2018. Gerry Sherwin confirmed that these are self- financing projects and therefore there is no impact to East Sussex County Council.
43. Cllr Balfour suggested putting in the finance report how much an income £1 of the grant scheme generates for the Unit.
44. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that the Unit would like to set up a heritage focussed grant fund for communities to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of AONBs in 2019, possibly drawing on reserves to do so. Jill Davison suggested that additional funding might also go towards raising the profile of the High Weald Walking Festival as a special celebration. Members agreed this approach.

Risk Management and staffing changes

45. The new team structure for landscape management Ross Wingfield and Christine Meadows has settled in very quickly. There has also been additional support from Iain Parkinson, who is on secondment from Kew Gardens, Wakehurst Place, focussed on improving meadows information across the AONB.
46. Matt Pitt continues to support the team one day a week on GIS. Eleanor Wilding who has been an invaluable member of the team has secured an intern position with London Zoological Society. Eleanor joined the Unit in July 2017, supporting the development of our GIS systems and outputs and will remain with the team for one day a week.
47. The Members were informed that there is still a vacancy for a Landscape Adviser position within the Unit. This position may be potentially advertised in early summer 2018.
48. Jason Lavender confirmed that one of the major risks to the AONB is the continual change within Defra of the ministerial direction. The Government review of the AONB core functions may also be a future risk to the workload of the Unit.
49. The Members were also informed that the AONB website had recently been maliciously attacked requiring for it to be moved to a new platform. The website will also be subject to a refresh for the build up to 2019 celebrations.
50. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that there was also a concern about the changes in the structure within East Sussex County Council finance services which is leading to additional work pressure on the Unit's officers.

AOB

51. Gerry Sherwin informed the Members that the changes to the Data Protection Regulation which comes into place in May 2018 will have an impact on the Unit's workload. This will introduce new requirements for how organisations process personal data. The Unit has to

ensure positive opt-in processes are in place to retain individual contact details on its current database.

52. Claire Tester informed the Members that as part of the National Planning Policy Framework review paragraphs 115 and 116 have been amalgamated and edited. This information also needs to flow into the Planning Advice note which is in the process of being updated to ensure a consensus from the local authorities.
53. Cllr Tidy reminded the Members of the District Council elections that will be held in May 2019. There will also be changes to some constituency boundaries which may lead to changes in Members. It was agreed once the impact of the elections was known it would be useful to provide additional AONB training to the new Members.
54. The items for JAC agenda were discussed and the Members agreed that there would be a participative workshop on the AONB Management Plan on a 'Natural Beauty' theme; AONB Management Plan review; 'Looking Back Looking Forward' - Annual Review presentation and a verbal summary of changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) review.
55. The next Management Board Meeting date would be considered after the OSG Meeting on 19 May 2018.

Agenda item: 8

High Weald Officer Steering Group

Notes of a meeting of the High Weald Officer Steering Group held on Monday 19 March 2018, at 2pm Acorn Tourism, Woodland Enterprise, Hastings Road, Flimwell, TN5 7PR

Clerk to JAC: Samantha Nicholas

PRESENT:

David Greenwood, Surrey County Council (Chairman)
David Scully, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Jennifer Hollingum, Mid Sussex District Council (Vice-chairman)
Matthew Nouch, Ashford District Council
Diane Russell, Rother District Council
Tim Dyer, West Sussex County Council
Helen Forster, Kent County Council
Sally Marsh, Co-Director High Weald AONB Unit
Claire Tester, Planning Advisor High Weald AONB Unit

	Agenda Item	Action
1.	Minutes	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record.	
2.	Apologises for absence	
	The following persons gave their apologies for absence Jenny Knowles, Virginia Pullan, Natalie Bumpus, Murray Davidson, Helen French, Sarah Thompson, Ines Watson and Elizabeth Brigden.	
2.1	The officers were informed that Elizabeth Brigden, Crawley Borough Council was joining the OSG. Tom Nutt was thanked for all his support with the Joint Advisory Committee over many years. Ines Watson, Horsham District Council will also be joining the OSG.	
2.1	David Greenwood thanked the officers for attending the re-scheduled meeting original set for 28 February 2018, recognising that many of the officers were under considerable time pressure.	
3.	High Weald Management Plan Review	
3.1	Sally Marsh thanked the officers for their comments to date on the draft version of the AONB Management Plan. Sally confirmed that the comments that we were going through did not contain West Sussex CC feedback, Crawley BC or Hastings BC. Tim Dyer was	

- present at the meeting and spoke on behalf of West Sussex CC. Helen Forster, Kent CC, confirmed that she was in the process of gathering information internally and would send any additional comments to Sally Marsh.
- 3.2 Crawley BC, Tandridge DC and Sevenoaks BC have indicated that there are no other substantive changes above the ones already commented on.
- 3.3 Diane Russell and David Scully voiced their concern that due to additional changes to the Management Plan there was insufficient time for officer discussion. However, the officers agreed that these changes were necessary and would enhance their ability to support appeal processes and policy changes.
- 3.4 Sally Marsh confirmed that the Management Board directive from the meeting held on 7 March 2018 was to maintain the current AONB Management Plan timetable as closely as possible.
- 3.5 The officers were taken through the timetable for the AONB Management Plan Review. Working back from March 2019 the 15 local authorities required 3-4 months to go through internal sign-off processes. The Final version of the AONB Management Plan requires sign off at November 2018 JAC. The Public consultation would therefore need to start no later than June 2018 so that final comments can be scrutinised in August and submitted to OSG and MB in September/October 2018.
- 3.6 Sally Marsh confirmed that there is flexibility in the timetable to have an additional OSG Meeting late April/early May to be followed by the Summer Management Board Meeting who can sign off any further changes after this meeting if required. Local authorities also have an opportunity to further consult on the AONB Plan through the Public consultation process.
- 3.7 David Scully enquired if there is a legal requirement to ensure the Management Plan is approved by March 2019. Sally Marsh confirmed that it is a legal requirement with a reputation risk if delay occurred which might impact on ensuring the AONB was in a robust position to support future Agri-environment schemes.

- 3.8 The officers went through the summary spreadsheet of local authority responses - general issues:
- 3.9 Substantial rewrite rather than 'light touch'**
 Sally Marsh explained to the officers that in March 2017 the AONB JAC had agreed a report on Management Plan Review 2017: Progress and issues report. This report indicated that there may be substantive issues the AONB Management Plan review would be required to address leading to a more in-depth review for these areas.
- 3.10 The first area was the loss from the public domain of critical AONB policy information due the changes to the GOV.uk website. To mitigate for this loss of access to vital policy information the National Association of AONBs have produced standard text to go into all AONB Plans. This will give an even approach for all AONB Management Plans nationally.
- 3.11 The approach was discussed and agreed.** Officers/Unit
- 3.12 **Extended Character Summaries:**
 The expanded character statements would support officers through future appeal processes. It was agreed that more detailed character component characteristic summaries would be provided within the AONB Management Plan. The style of these is based on Natural England's National Character Area profiles. The character summaries were consulted on at the internal consultations held in May 2017. The information is based on over 15 years of research through the Unit's work.
- 3.13 There was general agreement about the approach subject to minor text changes** Officers/Unit
- 3.14 **Changes to the Public Understanding and Enjoyment section**
 'Public understanding and enjoyment' reflected the countryside agency guidance in 2004 for AONBs to mirror Conservation Board duties Guidance now focuses on the primary purpose of designation. The objectives of PUE have been retained but more clearly tied to the primary purpose.

- 3.15 Defra has also made the point that the AONB Plans need to reflect the focus on land based economy and ‘community life’ provided by the 1949 Act.
- 3.16 David Scully asked whether the land base business and community life should be in separate sections. The general agreement was that the community life should remain together.
- 3.17 Diane Russell enquired whether we had any appeal evidence on ‘Natural Beauty’. Sally Marsh confirmed that South Downs Natural Park had commissioned a QC to look at the natural v scenic beauty but as yet this has not been published.
- 3.18 **What is Natural Beauty p.16**
A general discussion took place on the how we can build into the AONB Plan further detail on what is ‘Natural Beauty’ It was agreed that the natural beauty section should be more clearly linked with the statement of significance ensuring these pages were facing each other.
- 3.19 **Statement of Significance p17**
- 3.20 **It was agreed that 2 paragraphs on what people value from the 2014 Plan should be retained and revised in this section** Sally Marsh
- 3.21 **Concerns that Priority Actions will have resources and planning policy compliance implications.**
Previous plans and the current Plan make it clear that actions and targets are ambitions only and are not binding. It was recognised that no public body can commit to actions beyond the current financial year and the JAC agreed that actions in the Plan are indicative only. A discussion took place around what the most effective wording would instead of ‘priority actions’.
- 3.22 **It was agreed to rename ‘Priority Actions’ to ‘Aims and Actions’. More explanation of what they are would be placed ‘in the Plan’ includes section p.7 and a list of public bodies should be included** Sally Marsh
- 3.23 A discussion took place on changes to Indicators of success (IoS). There was general agreement that the Indicators align to ‘Natural Capital’ and they are already being monitored so the information would be more accessible.

3.24	The officers then considered the spreadsheet of comments and went through more detailed changes to the Plan. Revisions were agreed to be added to the initial draft AONB Management Plan review to go to JAC on 28 March 2018. There could also be opportunities to further reflect on changes at an additional meeting if required to be held at the end of April/beginning of May 2018.	The Unit
3.25	There was a discussion on description of 'Others'	
3.26	It was agreed that references to National Planning and Policy Framework would require changes on p.8	Claire Tester
3.27	Geology p.20 and p.21	Sally Marsh
3.28	G3 'Priority Actions' was discussed and it was agreed by the officers that the terminology 'landscape sensitive' should be used and reworded for second and fourth priority action.	Sally Marsh
3.29	Settlement chapter A discussion took place on the Key Characteristics of the Settlement chapter being too focussed on farmsteads: It was agreed to amalgamate specific points. Pt 9 would also include 'ridge top roads '	Sally Marsh
3.30	A discussion took place on the importance of eighteenth century and it was agreed to include reference to this in the beauty of the High Weald: Exploring the landscape section.	Sally Marsh
3.31	Settlement chapter: top five issues A discussion took about the top five issues It was agreed that Diane Russell would reword the issues and email to Group.	Diane Russell
3.32	Indicators of success p.24 The officers discussed the interpretation of 'No loss of separation between small settlements.' It was agreed to change the terminology to 'no coalescence of settlements'. David Scully also brought this up for the woodland Indicators of Success, however, the officers agreed that this terminology is appropriate for the audience it is aimed at. The officers were also reminded that this is for the AONB and the Plan has a wider remit	Sally Marsh

	than planning.	
3.33	It was agreed that the section on Dark Skies should sit within the Settlement section.	Sally Marsh
3.34	David Greenwood agreed that due to the time the most important agenda items need to be discussed.	
4.0	AONB Design Guidance	
4.1	The next sub-group meeting for the Design Guidance is to be held on 18 April 2018 at Acorn Tourism. The draft guidance will be presented at the Summer Management Board Meeting for approval to go to consultation if appropriate.	The Unit
5.1	MSDC officer training	
5.2	Due to the time Jennifer Hollingum deferred this update until September 2018	
6.0	Service Level Agreement	
6.1	Samantha Nicholas informed the officers that in 2015 the local authorities signed up to a new style Service Level Agreement which requires renewal. The agreement is between East Sussex CC and would be over a five year period following the AONB Management Plan. The officers will receive an updated version before the next officer steering group meeting in September, which they may wish to pass through their legal department. Jennifer Hollingum reminded the Unit that Mid-Sussex DC had asked for some additional amendments which will also be added into the new agreement.	Samantha Nicholas/Jason Lavender
7.0	Next Meeting date Diane Russell was keen to have another meeting to ensure any outstanding minor points could be discussed before going to Public consultation. It was agreed that some dates at end of April and beginning of May would be circulated. Matthew Nouch, Ashford BC indicated that that he would not be available as the examination of the Local Plan would be taking place then. Tim Dyer confirmed that he was happy with the progress of the Plan and would not require attending a further meeting.	The Unit

- It was also confirmed that the OSG Chairman will present the OSG position on the Management Plan Review progress at the AONB Joint Advisory Meeting.
- 8.0 The remaining officers continued with the Management Plan review
- 8.1 **Settlement chapter: priority actions p.24**
A discussion took place on small scale community horticulture and some felt these points might sit better within the land based section.
- 8.2 **Routeways** Sally Marsh
It was agreed to remove from pt 7 'formal designation' from the R1 Priority Actions p.28
- 8.3 **Woodlands** Sally Marsh
Move 'including small loans' W1 pt1 Priority Actions p. 31
- 8.4 **Woodlands FH2 pt 2 Priority Actions include retaining features such as existing hedgerows, ditches and other field row boundaries.**
- 8.5 **Land based economy and related community life** Diane
A discussion took place on the importance of rural community life and how it is represented in the Plan. Diane Russell agreed to look further at the top five issues. It was agreed to add into the character statement a point on the importance of retaining local amenities such as post offices, shops and business units. Russell/Sally Marsh
Top five issues to be reviewed
- 8.6 **It was agreed to; Indicator of success pt 3 removal of words after management within farmsteads
retain local authority farm tenancies LBE1**

Agenda Item: 10

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 28 March 2018

Title of Report: Revenue Budget 2018/19

By: Treasurer to the Joint Advisory Committee

Purpose of Report: To approve the Revenue Budget 2018/19

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to approve:

1. approved the Revenue Budget for 2018/19;
 2. thank Defra and partner authorities for maintaining their contributions.
-

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report sets out the budget for 2018/19 following a consultation approved by this committee in November 2017.
- 1.2 The budget supports the High Weald AONB Work Plan 18/19 which sets out how the High Weald AONB Unit will deliver its core functions and review and enable implementation of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.

2. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

- 2.1 Appendix A summarises the forecast out-turn for 2017/18, the proposed budget for 2018/19 and the indicative budget for 2019/2020. Appendix B summarises the project budgets.
- 2.2 The Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) contribution for 2018/19 includes an inflationary increase of £4500 and is forecast to be £269,000.
- 2.3 Other income of £8,800 and an allocation of 82.6% of the Defra single pot contribution to core activities has achieved a balanced budget for 2018/19.

3. BUDGET 2017/18

- 3.1 The High Weald core budget is forecast to have a surplus of £15,600 in 2017/18 arising from a rate rebate and additional income. The forecast reserve at 31 March 2018 is £140,600.

4. BUDGET 2018/19

Core Budget – Expenditure

- 4.1 The budget for 2018/19 is presented in Appendix A. It is based on the 2017/18 figures with inflation at the ESCC applied rate of 1% for salaries and 0% for other costs. The budget allows for:
- (i) Staff costs: a budget for a core team of 5.1 FTE staff which has increased to accommodate incremental progression, contributions to the pension fund of 20.30% and estimated inflation of 1% for Single Status and LMG salaries. Should the pay award be settled at more than 1% increase, it will need to be funded from reserves.
 - (ii) Accommodation/office equipment costs: a standstill budget for office rent, rates, office equipment, office maintenance and running costs.
 - (iii) Partnership running costs: a standstill budget that covers NAAONB membership fees, JAC meetings, representing the partnership at regional and national forums, producing the annual review and miscellaneous public relations costs.
 - (iv) Support services: East Sussex County Council's charges for IT, personnel and financial support.

Core Budget – Income

Defra

- 4.2 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has a funding agreement with AONBs which provides for a flexible 'single pot' contribution for core, projects and the sustainable development fund (SDF).
- 4.3 Following the last Comprehensive Spending Review Defra advised that National Parks and AONB budgets will be protected in real terms. The contribution to the High Weald will increase by £4500 to £269,000 in 2018/19.
- 4.4 The 2017/18 contribution of £269,000 was allocated as follows: £222,200 to Core and £42,300 to Projects.
- 4.5 Defra's total contribution for 2018/19 is shown in appendix A. It shows the contribution of £269,000 allocated as £222,200 to Core and £46,800 to Projects.

Local Authority Contributions

- 4.6 The respective levels of support from each authority are shown in Appendix A.
- 4.7 In respect of core costs, all authorities have confirmed their contributions at 2017/18 levels.

Self-funding projects

- 4.8 JAC expenditure on self-funding projects is presented at Appendix B and is estimated to be £419,200 in 2018/19. Appendix B indicates contributions from local authority partners to projects, including High Weald Heroes.
- 4.9 It is proposed to allocate £46,800 from the Defra 'single pot' to Projects.
- 4.10 All projects have a balanced budget over the total life of the project. Income is allocated on a pro rata basis over the relevant number of financial years to give a net balance of zero.
- 4.11 Successful grant applications, and inclusion of the Sussex Lund as a new programme, has resulted in a significant increase in expenditure on self-funding projects.

5. FINANCIAL ISSUES 2019/20 AND BEYOND

- 5.1 Maintenance of the Defra contribution to the JAC in real terms until 2020 continues to be very welcome.
- 5.2 External contributions towards the management of the Landscape Enhancement Programme has ensured that the Other Income target for core costs is met, enabling a balanced core budget until 2020.
- 5.3 The project budget is sufficient for delivering the Management Plan Evidence and Guidance, the JAC's Outreach Programme including High Weald Heroes (supported by an 0.6 FTE), Landscape Enhancement Programme (supported by 1.6 FTE) and for new project development.
- 5.4 No new expenditure pressures for 2019/2020 and beyond are currently forecast.
- 5.5 Most of the estimated reserves at 31 March 2019 of £140,600 will be required in a worst case scenario of all staff being made redundant.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The 2018/19 core budget is a balanced budget which provides the JAC with the capacity to deliver its core functions.
- 6.2 The project budget has increased significantly from 2017/18 and reflects inclusion of two new large-scale schemes, Sussex Lund and the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative.
- 6.3 On this basis the JAC is recommended to agree the budget.



Jill Fisher
Treasurer to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FORECAST OUTTURN 2017/18, BUDGET 2018/19 AND INDICATIVE BUDGET 2019/20

2016/17 Actual	2017/18		2018/19					2019/20
	Budget	Forecast	Original	Budget			Budget	Indicative
			Budget	Inflation	Pressures	Other		Budget
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Actual Details								
Expenditure								
219.0 Staff costs	235.8	234.7	235.8	1.8	0.0	2.2	239.7	242.1
36.6 Accommodation/office equipment	37.2	31.5	37.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.2	38.0
6.1 Partnership running costs	11.5	12.7	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.5	11.7
27.3 Support services	27.3	27.3	27.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.3	27.3
289.0 Total Core Expenditure	311.8	306.2	311.8	1.8	0.0	2.2	315.7	319.1
40.3 JAC expenditure on self-funding projects	431.6	161.7	431.6	0.0	0.0	(72.3)	359.3	359.3
61.0 Defra expenditure on self-funding projects	42.3	42.3	42.3	0.0	0.0	4.5	46.8	49.2
Project Enabling Fund expenditure on self-funding projects	16.6	10.7	16.6	0.0	0.0	(3.5)	13.1	13.1
101.3 Total JAC expenditure on self-funding projects	490.5	214.7	490.5	0.0	0.0	(71.3)	419.2	421.6
390.3 Total Gross Expenditure	802.3	520.9	802.3	1.8	0.0	(69.1)	734.9	740.7
Core Contributions								
210.2 Defra	222.2	222.2	222.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	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
4.1 Other Income	5.0	14.9	5.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	8.8	10.0
299.0 Total Core Contributions	311.9	321.8	311.9	0.0	0.0	3.8	315.7	319.1
Project Enabling Fund: (to)/from balances	16.6	10.7	16.6	0.0	0.0	(3.5)	13.1	13.1
0.0 Total Local Authority Project Enabling Fund Contributions	16.6	10.7	16.6	0.0	0.0	-3.5	13.1	13.1
61.0 Defra contributions to self-funding projects	42.3	42.3	42.3	0.0	0.0	4.5	46.8	49.2
40.3 JAC contributions to self-funding projects	431.6	161.7	431.6	0.0	0.0	(72.3)	359.3	359.3
400.3 Total Contributions	802.4	536.5	802.4	0.0	0.0	(67.5)	734.9	740.7
10.0 Transfer (from)/to reserves	0.1	15.6	0.1	(1.8)	0.0	1.6	(0.0)	(0.0)
(10.0) Total (surplus)/deficit for year	0.1	(15.6)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
115.0 Reserves Brought Forward	125.0	125.0	140.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	140.6	140.6
10.0 Transfer (from)/to reserves	0.1	15.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(0.0)	(0.0)
125.0 Reserves Carried Forward	125.1	140.6	140.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	140.6	140.6

HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SELF FUNDING PROJECTS OUTTURN 2017/18 & INDICATIVE BUDGET 2018/19

1 Community Outreach

JAC expenditure

Budget 2017/18			Forecast 2017/18			Indicative Budget 2018/19		
Exp	Income	Net	Exp	Income	Net	Exp	Income	Net
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
18.8			8.5			4.7		
Defra	(14.2)			(8.5)			(3.7)	
Local authorities	(4.7)			0.0			0.0	
Other	0.0	(0.0)		0.0	0.0		(1.0)	0.0

High Weald Heroes

JAC expenditure	23.7			23.5			26.2	
Defra	(11.9)			(11.4)			(13.1)	
Local authorities	(11.9)			(5.5)			(13.1)	
Other	0.0	0.0		(6.6)	(0.0)		0.0	0.0

2 Management Plan Evidence and Guidance

JAC expenditure

18.7			23.9			20.0		
Defra	(10.7)			(19.7)			(20.0)	
Local authorities	0.0			(1.2)			0.0	
Other	(8.0)	0.0		(3.0)	0.0		0.0	0.0

3 Landscape Enhancement

JAC expenditure

415.6			120.9			358.3		
Defra	0.0			(2.7)			0.0	
Local authorities	(38.1)			(10.2)			(20.1)	
Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund	(20.5)			(14.8)			(21.5)	
National Grid	(103.0)			(7.3)			(102.2)	
Sussex Lund (Charities Aid Foundation)	(225.0)			(83.1)			(214.5)	
Other	(29.0)	0.0		(2.8)	0.0		0.0	0.0

4 Project Development

JAC expenditure

13.6			3.0			10.0		
Defra	(5.5)			0.0			(10.0)	
Local authorities	(8.1)	0.0		(3.0)	0.0		0.0	0.0

JAC expenditure (to Appendix A)

Expenditure funded by PEF (to Appendix A)

Expenditure funded by Defra (to Appendix A)

490.5	(431.6)		179.7	(47.5)		419.2	(359.3)	
	(16.6)			(5.5)			(13.1)	
	(42.3)			(39.7)			(46.8)	
490.5	(490.5)	(0.0)	179.7	(92.7)	0.0	419.2	(419.2)	0.0

Agenda Item: 12

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 28 March 2018

Title of Report: High Weald AONB Design Guide Update

By: AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

1. Agree the revised Design Guide timetable as set out in Appendix 3.
 2. Delegate to the Management Board responsibility to agree a consultation version of the Design Guide to allow public consultation to proceed according to the agreed timetable.
-

1. Background

- 1.1 A recent report commissioned by the CPRE and the NNAONB has highlighted the significant increase in major housing developments in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the last five years. The High Weald has experienced the highest level of growth of any AONB in England, growing from an average of 186 units per year 2001-2011 to 895 units per year 2015-2017.
- 1.2 In response to this increased development pressure the High Weald AONB Partnership has been working with the local planning authorities to improve the quality of developments. Two specific projects have been progressed:
 - The [High Weald AONB Colour Study](#), which was published in October 2017 and
 - The High Weald AONB Design Guide, which is the subject of this report.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 In July 2017 the High Weald AONB Unit commissioned Design South East to assist in the production of a Design Guide to explain how housing developments should reflect High Weald character so they conserved and enhanced the AONB. The brief for this work is at Appendix X.
- 2.2 The Officer Steering Group appointed a Design Sub-Group chaired by Jennifer Hollingum of Mid Sussex District Council to steer this work and ensure that the Design Guide meets the needs of the local planning authorities. This group has met several times with the Design South East consultants. The High Weald Unit, assisted by Dr Bannister, has also spent a lot of time with the Design South East consultants to ensure that they understand High Weald character.
- 2.3 This liaison has taken longer than anticipated, but it was considered that the quality of this piece of work was more important than its speed of production. The delivery of the first full drafts of the document also coincided with the draft Management Plan and it was considered that the latter should take precedence for officer resources. As a result it was not possible to present the draft Design Guide to this JAC meeting as previously planned.

3 Current Situation

- 3.1 The Design Sub-Group is due to meet on 18th April to discuss the draft Design Guide and agree with the consultants what amendments need to be made prior to public consultation. It is then hoped to consult on the draft Design Guide alongside the Management Plan in June/July.
- 3.2 To enable this revised timetable JAC is requested to delegate the sign-off of the consultation draft Design Guide to Management Board. It is suggested that, once the Design Sub-Group is content with the draft, it is circulated to all JAC and OSG members so they have an opportunity to input any further comments before Management Board considers the consultation version.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 Members are asked to approve the following recommendations:
 - a. Agree the revised timetable as set out in Appendix 3.
 - b. Delegate to the Management Board responsibility to agree a consultation version of the Design Guide to allow public consultation to proceed according to the agreed timetable.

Claire Tester, AONB Planning Advisor (Claire.testers@highweald.org)

High Weald AONB Design Guide

Timetable

June 2017	Consultants Design South East commissioned
July 2017	Inception Workshop
Sept 2017	Design Sub-Group discussion on structure
Oct 2017	Progress report to MB
Jan 2018	Design Sub-Group discussion on content
Feb 2018	High Weald Unit brief DSE on character
Mar 2018	Progress report to JAC
Apr 2018	Design Sub-Group review draft
May 2018	Management Board sign-off consultation draft
June - July 2018	Formal Public Consultation
August 2018	Amendments and modifications
Sept - Oct 2018	Amended draft discussed by OSG & MB
Nov 2018	Final version agreed by JAC
Winter 2018	Launch and communications

Agenda Item: 13

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 28th March 2018

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 some years following a requirement put in place by the Audit Commission, the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee's annual external accounts were audited by an external and third party organization (in addition to the annual audit undertaken by ESCC) and the accounts were 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 maintained the local authority contributions to the core budget, albeit without an increase in line with inflation.

2.0 Key risks 2018/19 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 was 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 current Chancellor of the Exchequer may at any time choose to revoke the funding settlement for AONB partnerships made 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.
- 3.3 Raising external funds to support the work remains difficult and it has become increasingly competitive. We took the pragmatic approach and during 2015-2016 moved to a smaller, more resilient core team competent across a range of disciplines. However, the AONB Unit also 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.
- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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 and/or considered:
- 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 e.g. 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, and 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;
 - Investigating 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 It's clear that 2018-19 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 2018 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.

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

Date: April 2018 - March 2019

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				
Likelihood	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Consequence				

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.

Unit ref	Risk no	Risk	Root Causes	Owner	Inherent Risk			Controls / Mitigating Actions	Control Owner	Control Rating	Residual Risk		
		What can go wrong	How it can go wrong		Likelihood	Consequence	Matrix Zone				Preventative & reactive control measures	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. 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 continue 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 without adversely affecting on service explored. Planned change in scope of JAC's core work programme.	AONB Director	2	4	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 & remit 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 and/or the current Secretary of State. National Elections and/or Cabinet re-shuffles resulting in the loss of supportive DEFRA Secretary of State & Ministers.	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 S of S & Ministers directly and in conjunction with NAAONB and SEEPL. Active engagement of High Weald AONB Patrons and supportive High Weald	AONB Director	2	3	5	Red

