

High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee



Agenda

High Weald JAC Meeting

Wednesday 23 November 2022

10.30am at Uckfield Civic Centre, Ashdown Room

1. Deer and their management in the High Weald AONB
A presentation from Sandy Williamson, High Weald Deer Co-ordinator and Jamie Cordery, Forestry Commission
2. Apologies
3. Members' Interests
Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of any interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declaration at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.
4. Urgent matters
Members are asked to raise any urgent matters at this stage and not at the end of the meeting. The Chairman will decide whether the JAC should discuss any items so raised but asks members to give him prior notification of such matters unless urgency prevents it.
5. Election of additional Members to JAC Management Board
To note changes to the Management Board Members due to changes within the local authorities
6. Minutes of the JAC meeting
To consider the minutes of the last meeting of the JAC held on 30 March 2022 (page 3)
7. Minutes of the Management Board Meeting
To note the matters arising from the Management Board meeting held on 25 October 2022 (page 10)
8. Minutes of the Officer Steering Group
To note the minutes of the last meeting of the OSG held on 29 September 2022 (page 17)
9. High Weald Management Plan 2024-2029 update
To participate in a 20-year Management Plan Vision session
10. Revenue Budget for 2022/23
To consider and approve a report by the Treasurer on the draft Revenue Budget 2022/23 (page 24) and to start the official consultation for an increase in local authority contributions over 5-year period and note the report High Weald direction and resources (page 29).
11. Risk Management
To consider a report by the AONB Co-Director on risk management (page 35); Appendix A: High Weald JAC - Key Risks

12. Any other business

Communication to Local Authority Councillors

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

Samantha Nicholas

Clerk to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
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Agenda item: 6

High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting



30 March 2022 at 10.30am at The Dairy, Chiddinglye, West Hoathly

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

Members present:

Cllr P Bradbury	West Sussex County Council/Mid Sussex District Council (Chairman)
Cllr P Dixon	Wealden District Council (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Mrs E Kirby-Green	East Sussex County Council
Cllr M Dickins	Sevenoaks Borough Council
Cllr Dr L Hall	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Mrs J Davison	Community Cooptee
Mrs S Tidy	Farming Cooptee
Ms J Hull	Forestry Commission
Ms L Newland	Natural England

Officers:

Mr J Lavender	AONB Co-Director
Ms G Sherwin	AONB Business Manager
Ms C Tester	AONB Planning Adviser
Ms R Bennington	AONB Education Officer
Mr T Jackson	AONB Land Management Project Adviser
Mr A Fowler	Finance Manager, East Sussex County Council
Ms S Gilbert	Planning Officer, Crawley Borough Council
Mr A Sime	Planning Officer, Ashford Borough Council

1. Introduction to Chiddinglye Estate

- 1.1 Becky Cook and Ross Symonds gave a talk to the Members about the farm and the wider estate, its recent history and business diversification, and the estate's plans for the future.
- 1.2 Following the presentation, the Chairman thanked Becky and Ross for hosting the event at the Missing Link Brewery for the informative talk on the estate's diversification.

2. Presentation on the High Weald Heroes education programme

2.1 Rachel Bennington gave a presentation on the unique and successful education programme run by the AONB team, which is provided free of charge to over 85 primary schools within and close to the AONB. The presentation highlighted several things:

- The programme's emphasis on developing an active relationship between the children, their local countryside, and the wider High Weald landscape
- While all the activities are linked to the national curriculum this learning is strengthened by making direct links to their local landscape
- The measures taken during the last two years when Rachel couldn't visit schools as a result of Covid 19 e.g. habitat creation in school grounds and on-line presentations to teachers
- The more recent development of a local heritage activity working with several schools to help them explore the historic environment close to the school

2.2 To learn more about the education programme, the members were encouraged to watch a short video on the children and teachers' experiences of High Weald Heroes. See here: <https://youtu.be/g0l1Bl282Ik>

3. Apologies

3.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Carey, Cllr Pickering; Cllr Maya, Cllr Irvine, Cllr J Vine-Hall; Jennifer Hollingum; Murray Davidson; Sally Marsh and Sarah Brotherton.

3.2 The Members were informed that Cllr Hogben of Horsham District Council has been replaced by Cllr James Wright on the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). Cllr Steed of Surrey County Council has also stepped down from the JAC and to date a replacement has yet to be announced.

4. Members Interests

4.1 No declarations of interest were raised by the Members.

5. Urgent Matters

5.1 No urgent matters were raised.

6. Minutes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting

6.1 RESOLVED to note the minutes of the JAC meeting held on 24 November 2021.

7. Minutes of the Management Board meeting

7.1 RESOLVED to note the minutes of the Management Board meeting held on 9 October 2022.

8. Minutes of the Officer Steering Group (OSG)

8.1 RESOLVED to note the minutes of the OSG meeting held on 9 February 2022.

9. High Weald Management Plan 2024-2029

9.1 The Members considered a report and presentation by the Planning Advisor Claire Tester on the review of the current AONB Management Plan in preparation for the publication 2024-2029 Management Plan. There will be two new sections to the Management Plan – a new Dark Skies component and a 20-year landscape strategy to soil, planning, climate change, nature recovery, and people.

9.2 At the most recent OSG meeting, the AONB team gave the same presentation to the officers present. This was followed by a questionnaire sent to each local authority (and all 99 parish councils) seeking details on how their staff currently use the AONB Management Plan and asking for views on what could elements they felt were missing and what could be improved. There will be wider consultation during the summer.

9.3 The Members were told that Natural England (NE) has started their own review of the existing national guidance on writing and publishing AONB Management Plans and the High Weald AONB team are concerned this may result in generic and rigid guidance by failing to accommodate individual and often unique aspects of AONB landscapes. Laura Newland reassured the Members that NE is aware of these concerns.

9.4 Ruth Hull of the Forestry Commission suggested that the Glover review was an opportunity to make the duty of regard (places obligations on public bodies and the statutory undertakers) clearer to relevant organisations.

9.5 Matthew Dickens felt the existing AONB Management Plan tells a wonderful story of the AONB landscape, is well laid out, and asked that whatever changes are made can the Management Plan continue to use the language High Weald residents can engage with.

9.6 **RESOLVED** to note the report.

9.7 **AGREED** the commencement of the next review of the AONB Management Plan, its scope, and indicative timetable.

10. Revenue Budget for 2022/23

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report by Andy Fowler the Finance Manager of East Sussex County Council on the Revenue Budget for 2022/23. The Members were taken through the key areas of the budget.
- 10.2 A balanced core budget has been produced for 2022/23. This has been achieved through a planned drawdown of £11,100 from the JAC reserves.
- 10.3 The Members were informed that DEFRA is increasing the AONB partnership's core budget and while the amount has not yet been confirmed it is believed to be in the region of £40,000 per annum for the next three years.
- 10.4 Paragraph 5.6 outlined an indicative five-year budget, assuming rising costs and a static income. This highlights the challenge to the budget.
- 10.5 Given this challenge, Gerry Sherwin the AONB Business Manager outlined why it is essential to have a stepped increase of local authority financial contributions to the core AONB partnership budget. Over the last 12 years the core budget has been cut by 36% and the operational budget of £40,000 has been lost. Consequently, many of the AONB team's core roles are now part-time, some essential areas of work have been stopped or reduced, and recruitment to replace staff are sometimes put on hold. The Land Management Project Officer role, an essential part of the team, is currently funded by a mixture of different funding sources and grants when it should be a secure post funded by the core funds.
- 10.6 The AONB Unit has been very successful establishing links with and raising funds from private enterprise such as National Grid and Sussex Lund. However, the introduction of a new and major grants programme like the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme proved how difficult it is to meet such a considerable commitment with the existing under resourced and already fully committed team.
- 10.7 Many new opportunities (and new demands) are not being met because the AONB team do not have the staff capacity to develop, facilitate, or implement the new opportunities new project funds may offer e.g. a wider Deer Management Scheme collaborating with Natural England and the Woodland Trust is difficult to realise if additional funding to support the core team is not found.
- 10.8 The Members discussed the nationally derived funding formula for Local Authority financial contributions to the work of the High Weald team. The Members agreed that supporting the AONB team to write and publish the AONB Management Plan was better value for money than using consultants, who would be very expensive and not undertake the wider work the AONB team does. However, it was also

agreed that in the current financial climate any request for an increase in local authority contributions needs more information.

- 10.10 There was unanimous support by the Members for an increase of local authority contributions with inflation built in and after consulting with their local authority. Cllr Bradbury, as Chairman, will be writing to each local authority to explain the reasons for a request to increase annual contributions.
- 10.11 It was agreed that Gerry Sherwin will write a briefing note to support the Members in their discussions with their respective local authorities and Members were asked to report back to Cllr Bradbury or Gerry Sherwin the thoughts of their local authorities.
- 10.12 Sylvia Tidy suggested the indicative five-year budget should show the cost of writing and publishing the AONB Management Plan 2024-2029. This was agreed by the Members.
- 10.13 **RESOLVED to approve the revenue budget for 2022/23**
- 10.14 **AGREED to review of the local authority contributions and a revised budget proposal for presentation to the November 2022 JAC meeting.**

11. Consultation on the Government's response to the Landscapes (Glover) Review:

- 11.1 Jason Lavender took Members through the report and informed them that the AONB Unit had decided to concentrate their efforts on informing and contributing to a collective English AONB partnerships response to be submitted by the National Association for AONBs. He focussed the attention of the Members on section 4.4 the main areas of concern:
- Double the current core funding for AONB teams over the life of this parliament and establish a fair and forward-looking funding formula reflecting ambitions and future needs
 - Strengthen the legal framework relating to AONB designation by giving the statutory duties greater weight to ensure all relevant authorities meet their duties when exercising their functions and contributing to AONB management plan implementation
 - Give AONB bodies a stronger voice in planning including statutory consultee status in planning applications and development plans
- 11.2 Jason also added that there appears to be an increasing interest in some quarters that the governance of AONB partnerships and the membership of JACs needs reviewing.

11.3 ACTION: Jason Lavender will circulate the English AONB partnerships' joint response to the of the consultation response to the Members when finalised.

12. Risk Management

12.1 The Committee considered a report by Jason Lavender on risk management and the associated risk management matrix. 2022-23 will continue to be characterised by the challenges outlined in the report while recognizing the constraints on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit remain the most significant risk to the core work of the High Weald AONB partnership.

12.2 AGREED that the Management Board continues to work with the AONB Unit to consider the risks and identify measures and options to manage and mitigate the effect of these risks.

13. Staffing

13.1 The AONB team has launched a new Deer Management Project in partnership with the Woodland Trust. Sandy Williamson has joined the AONB team and to work part-time and she brings with her a wealth of experience across the rural sector and a long-standing knowledge of the High Weald.

13.2 Tobias Jackson has joined the team as a full-time Land Management Project Officer to work primarily on the High Weald Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Sussex Lund. Tobias joins the AONB Unit from the Kent Wildlife Trust and has previously worked for Natural England so his knowledge, perspective, and contacts in the area will be hugely valuable.

13.3 Stephanie Mason has also been recruited recently as a part-time Senior Project Administrator on the High Weald Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Sussex Lund. Stephanie lives within the High Weald and brings considerable teaching and countryside management experience to the team.

13.4 However, the AONB Unit has not been successful with the recruitment of a Project Manager to oversee and manage the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme meaning this role continues to be covered by Gerry Sherwin, further reducing her capacity to work on other things and raise new sources of funding for the AONB partnership's work.

13.5 After six years with the AONB Unit Claire Tester the AONB Planning Advisor will be leaving in May to join one of the planning teams at the South Downs National Park Authority. Claire's expertise will be sorely missed particularly at a time when the High Weald AONB is facing an unprecedented level of development which threatens to fundamentally change its distinctive character.

13.6 Charlotte Gardener completed her very successful Meadows Maker internship with the AONB Unit as part of a collaboration with Plantlife and it was pleasing to learn she will be taking her skills and knowledge to Natural England particularly so as she will still be working in the High Weald area.

13.7 Cllr Bradbury the Chairman welcomed the new staff to the AONB Unit and thanked both Claire and Charlotte for all their work and efforts on behalf of the High Weald AONB landscape and its residents.

14. A.O.B.

14.1 It was agreed that the new High Weald Deer Management Initiative will be an agenda item for the next JAC and include an item on the Forestry Commission's activities in this area.

14.2 The next High Weald JAC Meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 November 2022.

Agenda item: 7

HIGH WEALD JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Management Board
Minutes – Tuesday 25 October 10.30 am, at Acorn Tourism, TN5
7PR



Samantha Nicholas
Clerk to the High Weald AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

Present: Members:

Cllr P Bradbury	West Sussex County Council/Mid Sussex District Council
Cllr J Vine-Hall	Rother District Council
Cllr Mrs E Kirby-Green	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Mrs S Carey	Kent County Council
Mrs S Tidy	NFU Co-optee

Guests:

Cllr Mrs J Howell	Wealden District Council
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Also Present:

Jason Lavender	AONB Director (job share)
Gerry Sherwin	AONB Business Manager
Samantha Nicholas	AONB Clerk to JAC

Actions

- Paragraph 15** **The Members ratified the Sussex Lund Panel’s grant award decisions listed in Appendix 3 of the Landscape Enhancement Programme Grant Awards report; and the Members noted the changes to the National Grid’s Landscape Enhancement Initiative awards.**
- Paragraph 24** **The Members requested that a report to reflect this recommendation be presented at the next meeting of the JAC but with the recognition that some local authorities may be unable to support this approach.**
- Paragraph 30** **The Members agreed that the AONB Management Plan content structure and timetable should be reported at the next JAC meeting**
- Paragraph 43** **The Members requested an item at a future JAC meeting on how local authority Members and officers can raise the awareness of the AONB and the work of the AONB partnership within their respective local authorities.**

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from: Jennifer Hollingum, Jill Davison, Cllr Dickins, and Cllr Newton

Members' Interests

2. There were no members' interests that required noting.

Minutes of the meeting from 14 June 2022

3. The minutes for 14 June were agreed to be an accurate record.

High Weald Landscape Enhancement Programme – grants award 2022

4. Gerry Sherwin provided a summary of the Landscape Enhancement Programme Grant Awards report, which was circulated prior to the meeting.
5. The primary objective of this funding programme is to enable private and non-government organizations to support landscape conservation and enhancement projects across the AONB. The AONB team manages the two grants forming this funding programme – Sussex Lund and the National Grid's Visual Impact Provision fund.
6. Running since 2017 Sussex Lund grants have been awarded a total of £935,000 to 204 projects. Over the five years of the National Grid's Visual Impact Provision fund, grants of more than £450,000 have been awarded.

Sussex Lund

7. This year 26 applications were received with a total grant request of £173,925. This is fewer than 2021 and is partly a consequence of the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme set up last year and run by the AONB team in parallel with Sussex Lund. Also, it was the first year of a slight change of direction with Sussex Lund placing a greater emphasis on community projects, and the awareness of the fund among eligible groups will take time to build.
8. The Sussex Lund Grant Panel met in October and awarded funds to 18 applications with grants ranging from £785 to £10,000. The total grant award for this year is £111,018.

National Grid's Visual Impact Provision fund

9. Five years ago, the AONB team secured three grants from the National Grid scheme totalling £466,243: Beautiful Boundaries 1 (grant of 199,860); Beautiful Boundaries 2 (grant of 164,612); and Wonderful Woodlands (£101,771).

10. At the Management Board meeting in June 2020, Members delegated responsibility to the AONB Director for agreeing the reallocation of grant awards to new participants and adjustments to the grant awards of existing recipients.
11. The grants are enabling work by farmers and land managers on 24 holdings and focus on new hedge planting, hedge restoration, planting hedgerows trees, managing woodland boundaries, and creating and enhancing woodland rides, glades, and ponds.
12. Projects are on-going but some farmers and land managers have dropped out of the scheme owing to increasing material costs and a reduced capacity to manage and implement their projects. Where someone drops out others with similar project ideas are invited to participate.
13. Members noted the importance of having adequate resources and experienced staff at the AONB Unit to project manage complex funding programmes supporting the land managers, residents, and community groups with landscape and conservation enhancement projects across the AONB. They also highlighted that this need is particularly important when grant programmes change direction and remit.
14. Members thought the successful applicants should be asked to promote their projects within their own peer group and suggested the AONB team attends the annual conference for parish councils to promote Sussex Lund.
15. **ACTION: The Members ratified the Sussex Lund Panel's grant award decisions listed in Appendix 3 of the Landscape Enhancement Programme Grant Awards report; and the Members noted the changes to the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative awards.**

Local authority budget review

16. Jason Lavender gave a verbal report on the views of the AONB Partnership's local authorities on the initial consultation about an increase to the local authority annual contributions.
17. The issue of the increasing demands placed on the AONB Partnership's resources and the need to address shortfalls in the core budget has been discussed by the Management Board and the JAC at their meetings for a year. The Management Board has identified a reasonable and appropriate increase to each local authority's annual contribution to ensure the continuity and resilience of the AONB Partnership and to secure additional funding on offer from Defra (and others) to the Partnership.
18. At the JAC meeting in March 2022, Members were unanimous in their support for an increase in local authority contributions and agreed to a review of the contributions and a revised budget proposal for presentation at the November 2022 JAC meeting.

19. In June the JAC Chairman wrote to the local authority JAC Members proposing a flat rate increase to the annual contributions and giving an opportunity for each local authority to consider this before their own budget setting processes begin.
20. Gerry Sherwin presented a table summarizing the responses. This also provided some of the historical context comparing each council's contributions in 2001/02 with 2022/23, and what the contributions would be if they were based on the funding formula used in 2001/02.
21. To date, nine of the 15 local authorities have responded to this initial consultation. Six have agreed to the proposal and three have advised the AONB team they would consider an increase based on the percentage of their area within the AONB. Most have recognised the need for an inflationary increase.
22. Members were also asked to note:
 - Had the 2001/02 local authority contributions kept pace with inflation the total current contributions would be £140,080 rather than the current total of £83,700
 - Five local authorities have reduced their annual contributions since 2001 – Crawley BC, Tonbridge and Malling BC, Hastings BC, Ashford BC, Kent CC
23. The Members considered the responses and following a discussion of the figures and options, the Members unanimously agreed the option for a flat rate increase to the local authority annual contributions (£5,000 for county councils and £2,500 for district and borough councils) remains their recommendation to the JAC as reasonable and appropriate increase.
24. **ACTION: The Members requested that a report to reflect this recommendation be presented at the next meeting of the JAC but with the recognition that some local authorities may be unable to support this approach.**

Officer Steering Group (OSG) meeting - update

25. Samantha Nicholas gave a summary of the recent meeting. The meeting included: the local authority budget review; a presentation on the review of the AONB management plan and the results of the Savanta public engagement survey, and the Carbon Soil Project by Sarah Brotherton; the wide range of the AONB team's activities across the AONB including work supported by the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme and Sussex Lund; and an update on the Landscapes Review and the recruitment of a Planning Advisor.
26. The local authority officers were very positive about the on-going consultation as part of the AONB management plan review and agreed to the structural content of the Plan and the proposed consultation process.
27. Some officers also asked whether the AONB team could provide training on the AONB Management Plan for new Members and Officers. As this wouldn't be possible for some time owing to limited resources, it was recommended Members

and Officers watch [\(2\) High Weald AONB - LPA Presentation - YouTube](#) for the time being. It was agreed the AONB team will look to hold a webinar on the AONB Management Plan for local authorities and consider presentations for each of the 15 local authorities..

28. It was also suggested that the County Councils could host a training day/webinar on the AONB Management Plan for local authority Members and officers.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024 – 2029

29. Samantha Nicholas took the Members through the new content structure for the revised AONB Management Plan, which has been agreed by the OSG. The consultation timetable had also been updated to reflect the need for more feedback on the plan. The OSG will provide comments at additional on-line meetings and using Teams Group, which allows members of the group to comment at the same time.
30. **ACTION: The Members agreed that the AONB Management Plan content structure and timetable should be reported at the next JAC meeting**

Defra increase to the AONB core grant for access improvements in the AONB

31. Gerry Sherwin informed Members that Defra will be providing an increase to the AONB partnership's core grant to improve access to people of all ages and abilities, and from all backgrounds. These funds will be awarded over a three-year period but provided in two tranches - 2022/23- £184,336.26 and 2024/25 - £219,025.36. Given that Defra require this year's funds to be spent by 31st March next year, the AONB team has undertaken the following:
32. Allocated £14,823 to Buchan Country Park (owned by WSCC) on the edge of Crawley towards the improvements to multi-user access within the park and links to a promoted trail around the park
33. Initiated extensive discussions with the four AONB partnership county councils' public rights of way teams, the Ramblers, Sustrans, and the Ashdown Forest Conservators seeking ideas for eligible access improvement projects
34. The Members welcomed the new funds for access projects and discussed the different attributes of kissing gates and pedestrian gates and the need to ensure the needs of both farmers needing to keep livestock secure and those with limited mobility are fully considered.

Public rights of way issues

35. Jason Lavender provided a brief update on the AONB team's concern regarding the diversion of historic routes that are designated as public rights of way in the AONB.

There has been a constructive meeting with the KCC's Public Rights of Way and Access, which ensured the AONB team and KCC each had a better appreciation and understanding of the issues on both sides. Further work resolving this matter has been put on hold for the foreseeable future owing to limits on the AONB team's resources.

36. Cllr Carey confirmed that the existing legislation and the three tests a path diversion needs to meet doesn't recognise the historical or cultural importance of routeways. Cllr Howell and Cllr Kirby-Green both felt it often seems too easy to divert public rights of way and they too had concerns about the diversions of historic routes within the AONB.

Staffing update

Jason Lavender informed the Members that:

37. Sandy Williamson, High Weald Deer Management Coordinator, has returned to work after a period of sick leave.
38. Following interviews, the AONB team has recently offered someone the position of Senior Advisor (Planning and Design) and they will start with the AONB Unit in the New Year.
39. Gerry Sherwin, AONB Business Manager, has returned from sick leave and will continue working until the next treatment stage expected in the New Year.

Any Other Business

40. Gerry Sherwin showed the Members the Biennial Review 2020-2022, which had been emailed to all JAC Members and local authority officers on the OSG in October. The Members were concerned that this information is not being effectively distributed to other Members within their local authorities by representatives on the JAC and OSG. It was decided this should be discussed further at a future JAC meeting.
41. The National Association for AONBs has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Arts Council England on their joint commitment to work together to nurture new links between arts and cultural organisations and England's AONB partnerships.
42. The Rural Prosperity Fund has recently been announced by the Government. This is a grant for capital projects for rural businesses and the funds will be allocated by the Government to district and borough councils for them to administer. The grant should be available from April next year until March 2025. The AONB team has already met with some local authority officers to discuss how the funds could best support rural businesses within the AONB such as Tottingworth abattoir, a vital asset for farmers in the High Weald and beyond, and in danger of closing.

43. ACTION: The Members requested an item at a future JAC meeting on how local authority Members and officers can raise the awareness of the AONB and the work of the AONB partnership within their respective local authorities.

44. The next meeting of the High Weald JAC Management Board TBD

Agenda item: 5

High Weald Officer Steering Group



Notes of a meeting of the High Weald Officer Steering Group held on Thursday 29 September 2022, at 10.00 am on Microsoft Teams

Samantha Nicholas
Clerk to the High Weald AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

PRESENT:

Jennifer Hollingum	Mid Sussex DC (Chairman)
Diane Russell	Rother DC (Vice-Chairman)
Alan Sime	Ashford BC
Sophie Gilbert	Crawley BC
Virginia Pullen	East Sussex CC
Tom Jackson	Hastings BC
Mark Daly	Horsham DC
Helen French	Sevenoaks DC
David Greenwood	Surrey CC
Vivienne Riddle	Tandridge DC
Jenny Knowles	Tonbridge & Malling BC
David Scully	Tunbridge Wells BC
Carlos Hone	Tunbridge Wells BC
Natalie Bumpus	Wealden DC
Kelly Sharp	Wealden DC
Don Baker	West Sussex CC

High Weald Unit:

Sally Marsh	AONB Joint Director
Sarah Brotherton	AONB Landscape Research Advisor
Samantha Nicholas	Clerk to the JAC

Summary of Actions:

<u>Pt</u>	<u>Information</u>	<u>To be actioned by</u>
4.5	it was agreed that local authorities should send feedback to Jason Lavender on the proposed increase to local authority contributions: Jason.lavender@highweald.org prior to the Management Board Meeting to be held on 25 October 2022	Officers
5.4	To circulate the updated Management Plan content structure and consultation timetable for approval.	Unit

5.5	To set up a Teams Group to enable better consultation on the Management Plan detail, and to hold an additional Microsoft Teams meeting to be scheduled in before the February Meeting	Unit
6.5	On request Sarah Brotherton sarah.brotherton@highweald.org will circulate the Public Engagement report	Unit
7.5	To find out more information on the Defra Access Project please contact ross.wingfield@highweald.org	Unit
11.5	To circulate AONB Management Plan presentation link	Unit

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Jason Lavender and Helen Shiver
- 1.2. Helen French informed the Group that she will be leaving Sevenoaks Borough Council. The Chairman thanked Helen for all the support she has given the Group over the years and wished her well in her new career.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 9 February 2022

- 3.1 The Minutes of 9 February 2022 were agreed to be an accurate account of the meeting.

4. Request for increase in local authority's contributions

- 4.1 Sally Marsh gave the background to the request for the increase in the local authority's (LA's) annual core contribution to the work of the AONB.
- 4.2 David Scully requested clarity on certain areas around the budget consultation:
 - the consultation process and when this will be agreed by JAC
 - what additional funding will secure
 - implications to the current Service Level Agreement
- 4.3 Sally confirmed that:
 - The High Weald JAC constitution allows the JAC to delegate decisions to the Management Board.
 - The Members wanted to inform the LAs as early as possible in their budget cycles so that they had plenty of time to provide feedback and inform their internal committees.
 - The consultation process was confirmed that feedback should be sent to Members or Jason Lavender on individual LAs positions on the uplift in budget contribution. This will be discussed at the Management Board meeting on 25 October. A report on Management Board decision will then be submitted to the

JAC Meeting on 23 November 2022 and the start of the consultation process with be noted.

- Defra has offered AONBs and National Parks additional funding, but these are largely for capital spend only. For example, there is an access revenue stream for PROWS which has a deadline of March 2023. This is largely a capital fund which require the AONB team to provide revenue support, and due to limited funding the HWAONB Unit is unable to recruit a community or access advisor which would benefit all the LAs.

4.4 Sally gave the LAs positions that had already contacted the Unit:

- ESCC, Wealden DC, Hastings DC and Rother DC have agreed to the uplift in budget contributions
- Horsham DC has written a briefing note and are waiting feedback from their Members
- Director of Place and Space for Ashford BC has met with Jason Lavender for further discussions.
- Surrey CC has also had further discussions with Jason Lavender

4.5 Within the meeting feedback was as follows:

- Crawley BC and Tonbridge & Malling BC are concerned with the approach due to the base contributions being irrespective of the area. However, they would be willing to consider an increase if there's more like a proportionate contribution to the amount of land within the AONB.
- Tunbridge Wells BC confirmed that they would be sending information to Jason Lavender on their position
- WSCC has received confirmation there was no objection, in principle.

4.5 **Actions: It was requested that if those local authorities that have not done so should contact to Jason Lavender Jason.lavender@highweald.org prior to the Management Board Meeting on 25 October 2022.**

4 Management Plan 2024- 2029 update

5.1 Sarah Brotherton requested that the Group signed off the Management Plan content page structure, and the consultation timetable, which had been circulated to the officers prior to the meeting. The feedback on these areas was as follows:

- The 'about the High Weald' section was shown as sandwiched between statement of significance and natural beauty section in the content page. There was a discussion regarding moving this back to its current location to improve the flow of the sections – see action 5.4
- With regards to the timetable, it should be noted that the OSG requested further meetings on the detail of the Management Plan wording prior to the next OSG meeting in February 2023. It was suggested that it would be useful to set up a

Teams group to help with this process and to send out individual components for updating to assist the feedback process.

5.2 A further discussion took place on detail which covered:

- Introduction of a summary list of objectives
- New components to be reflected in the Statement of Significance section
- Feedback on Dark Skies and Perceptual Qualities action points
- There was a wider discussion on whether we should have history and policies at the back of the Plan.

5.3 It was agreed that those who were able to would continue with this discussion at the end of the meeting to look at some of the detail of the text.

5.4 Action: The update on the new content structure and timetable would be circulated for approval.

5.5 Action: To set up a Teams Group to enable better consultation on the Management Plan detail, and to hold an additional Microsoft Teams meeting to be scheduled in before the February OSG Meeting.

5 Savanta Public Engagement Survey

5.1 Sarah highlighted to the Group the key findings from the Savanta Public Engagement survey that was commissioned in January 2022.

- This survey covered green spaces in general and the High Weald specifically; the frequency of access to both; barriers to accessing green spaces; reasons for leisure visits; barriers to visiting the AONB; and climate mitigation in the countryside.
- Just under 1000 people were surveyed, targeted at Sussex, Surrey, Kent and the London boroughs South of the Thames; containing 23 questions and additional demographic questions.
 - 50% of respondents indicated that they wanted to be actively involved in activities to help improve local green spaces.
 - 90% agreed or strongly agreed that green spaces improve their physical and mental health.
 - 39% of people have heard of the High Weald, which is very positive.
 - Respondents are visiting the High Weald, to relax, see the views and to reconnect with nature
 - It was asked what change you would be prepared to see in an AONB in order to address climate change; largely the responses were to plant more trees, but encouragingly sustainable farming and natural flood management were also popular answers.

6.5 Actions: sarah.brotherton@highweald.org will circulate the Report on request from the officers.

7. Carbon Soil Project presentation

- 7.1 Sarah took the Group through the findings of the carbon storage research which was a collaboration between Cranfield University and the National Association of AONBs. The main objective was to produce a map on carbon stocks and stores for all the English AONBs.
- 7.2 Two methodologies were undertaken; one was to base it on current literature and the other was using Cranfield's NATMAP soil carbon data. This data was mapped against the habitats in each AONB and from this carbon stores were calculated. Three AONBs provided data used for ground truthing which included the High Weald AONB. Each AONB was mapped by habitat based on Natural England priority habitats and non-priority habitats.
- 7.3 Results to note from the research:
- Biomass and flux were measured. Biomass is carbon stored in plants, and flux is the sequestration emission rates. Our biomass stores were way above other AONBs due to the number of trees and hedgerows that the High Weald has in the current landscape. The High Weald is placed fourth largest below other AONBs which have large peat deposits.
 - Carbon stocks (by per hectare) and a carbon store (total) data was measured. One of the most interesting results came from carbon stocks in semi-improved grasslands within the High Weald. It is estimated to hold more carbon than that under deciduous woodlands per hectare.
- 6.3 It was suggested that the results from the report will be fed into the appropriate sections of the Management Plan.
- 6.4 **Action: On request the Carbon storage study can be circulated to officers sarah.brotherton@highweald.org**

6 Update on AONB activities

- 7.1 Sally Marsh informed the Group on the Unit's on-going activities:
- Farming in Protected Landscapes is still open for applications. £100,000 funds were allocated in year 1, £400,000 is being forecasted for year 2 and, £200,000 for year 3. The Unit are still seeking new projects to fund. Our land management team spend a lot of their time scoping the projects so that they can meet Defra's criteria and do not cross over to the many other grants that are currently available.
 - Sussex Lund has received 26 applications for 2022 with the emphasis on community and engagement.
 - Defra Access Project has recently been launched and the land management team are working with WSCC on access project at Buchan Country Park. The Unit welcomes more local authority access projects which can be delivered for capital payments by end of March 2023.
 - High Weald Hero Scheme, for primary school education, is in its 15 year and we are looking at different ways to fund this successful programme.

7.2 Action: To discuss access projects, officers to contact ross.wingfield@highweald.org

8. Glover Review update:

8.1 Sally Marsh informed the Group that from the Glover Review, the National Association for AONBs has been given some additional funding to build capacity so that they can engage with Defra, Natural England and National Parks on equal basis in a national partnership to support protected landscapes.

9. AONB staff recruitment

9.1 Sally Marsh informed the group that Claire Tester had left the team in May and is now working for the South Downs National Park Authority. The Unit has been advertising for a replacement and interviews will be held on 5 October, which should result in the position being filled.

9.2 The team also have a position vacant for a project officer in the FiPI team, which so far have not been able to successfully fill.

10 Planning matters affecting the High Weald AONB

10.1 The officers informed the Group of any planning matters:

- Tunbridge Wells BC is waiting on the Inspector's report for their local plan.
- David Scully had circulated an appeal decision APP/M2270/W/21/3277310 to the Group, in Hawkhurst, for major development in the AONB. It was highlighted that the Inspector had taken the Management Plan into consideration. However, there was a concern that key components were balanced against each other, and this potential may be addressed in the new Management Plan.
- A discussion also took place on the consistency of approach towards planning matters and support for future appeals. It was concluded that this would be discussed further when a new planning advisor is in position.
- Rother DC is consulting on Local Plan Reg 18 in early 2023 and has commissioned a climate change study.
- Sevenoaks DC is consulting on Local Plan Reg 18 in November 2022.

11. Training for Local Authority officers and Members

11.1 A discussion took place on future training requirements for LAs. Tunbridge Wells BC and East Sussex CC enquired whether the Unit would be able to present to new Members on the Management Plan. East Sussex CC is holding a meeting on 18 January for ESCC. Tandridge DC also have new officers that would benefit from this type of training.

- 11.2 It was suggested that whilst the Unit did not have a Planning Advisor in position that there is an excellent presentation that Claire Tester recorded on the Management Plan to show to new Members.
- 11.3 The Unit welcome the opportunity to present to Members and officers and will consider how best to achieve this when the new Management Plan has been published.
- 11.4 Samantha Nicholas informed the Group that Dan Oakley from the South Downs National Park Authority, Dark Skies Advisor, was leaving at the end of the financial year. However, it might be a good opportunity for the officers to have a follow up webinar. There is also an opportunity to have a dark skies consultant to do a webinar with a supporting case study.
- 11.5 Action: to circulate AONB Management Plan presentation link.**

12 Additional Items for the Management Board to be held on 25 October 2022

- 12.1 Budget report and budget review consultation with local authorities
- 12.2 AONB Deer Management Strategy
- 12.3 Management Plan 20-year vision.

13. A.O.B

- 13.1 Don Baker updated the Group on the Sussex Nature Recovery Partnership. The Partnership are looking to set up the Governance framework and Panel whilst Defra formalise the legislation. The Partnership would like the High Weald AONB team to have a representative on the Panel, but they recognised that the AONB team is short staffed at present.
- 13.2 The JAC Meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 November 2022 at Uckfield Civic Centre.

Agenda Item: 10

Committee:	High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Date:	23 November 2022
Title of Report:	Draft Revenue Budget 2023/24
By:	Treasurer to the Joint Advisory Committee
Purpose:	To consider the draft Revenue Budget 2023/24 and agree it as a basis for consultation with contributing bodies

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to approve:

1. the draft budget for 2023/24; and
 2. the commencement of budget consultation with the local authorities and Defra.
-

1. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

- 1.1. A draft budget for 2023/24 is attached in Appendix A. It is recommended that the draft budget be approved as a basis for consultation with contributing bodies/authorities.
- 1.2. The draft budget recommends an uplift in local authority contributions in 2023/24 and proposes that contributions in 2024/25 include an inflationary increase of 3%.
- 1.3. A balanced core budget for 2023/24 has been achieved through additional contributions.
- 1.4. An indicative 5-year budget has been balanced through inflationary increases to uplifted contributions and a greater allocation of the Defra contribution to core.
- 1.5. There are some key financial issues and risks which are detailed in this report.
- 1.6. Following formal consultation with contributing bodies/authorities, a final budget for 2023/24 will be presented to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for approval at its March 2023 meeting.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. The draft budget should be considered within the context of the Direction and resourcing report.

- 2.2. It should be noted that local authority contributions in the region of £155,700 in 2023/24 are likely to generate additional funds for delivery of statutory purposes and AONB Management plan delivery of at least £1 million.

High Weald JAC budget 2022/23

- 2.3. The forecast outturn for 2022/23 is a balanced budget with a transfer to reserves of £9,200.
- 2.4. The national pay award of a pay uplift of £1,925 per person (pro rata) in 2022/23 was higher than planned and increased costs by £7,600. However, savings from a vacant planning post and additional Defra contributions have balanced the budget and allowed a contribution to the reserves. The forecast reserve at 31 March 2023 is £232,500.

3. FINANCIAL ISSUES

- 3.1. At the March 2022 meeting JAC Members recognised the Partnership's financial challenges and agreed that the Management Board should review the Partnership's budget.
- 3.2. Following the review, and an initial consultation with partner authorities, a draft budget is presented to the JAC for consideration.
- 3.3. Appendix A shows the Core Budget, Appendix B shows an indicative Project Budget and Appendix C shows an indicative 5-year budget. A balanced budget for 2023/24 is presented.
- 3.4. The draft budget assumes an allocation of the Defra contribution between core and projects of 79.5% to core and 20.5% to projects. The draft budget assumes that local authorities increase their contributions in line with the proposals.
- 3.5. If contributions are lower than requested, then the AONB Partnership will be unable to maintain the breadth of its core service, particularly the development and delivery of projects.

Core budget – expenditure

Summary

- 3.6. Inflation has been applied at rate of 4% for staff and 3% for all other costs. It should be noted however the CPI and RPI are currently significantly higher and this may have an impact on costs.
- 3.7. The budget is a balanced budget.

Staff costs

- 3.8. The draft budget allows for a growth in the AONB Partnership's core team from 5 FTE to 5.8 FTE. The budget allows for: Director 1FTE; Business Manager 0.8FTE; Senior Adviser (Planning and Design) 1FTE, Landscape Officer (Research, evidence and guidance) 0.6FTE; Land Management Adviser 1FTE, Communications Officer 0.6FTE, Team Support Officer/JAC clerk 0.8FTE; and an allowance for finance support.
- 3.9. Staff costs also reflect the 2022/23 pay award, inflation of 4% amounting to £18,700, and an increase in the training budget of £900.
- 3.10. The budget assumes contributions to the East Sussex Pension Fund of 17.60% in 2023/24.

Accommodation/office equipment

- 3.11. The budget covers the cost of office rent and services, running costs, supplies and software licences. An inflationary increase of 3% has been assumed.
- 3.12. The budget assumes that a greater increase in the costs of goods and services, particularly energy costs, can be accommodated in the short term, through savings on IT costs.

Partnership running costs and support services

- 3.13. Partnership running costs includes the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) membership fee and the costs associated with JAC meetings, representing the partnership at regional and national events, and producing the annual review. An inflationary increase of 3% has been assumed.
- 3.14. The budget assumes that a greater increase in the costs of goods and services, particularly energy costs, can be accommodated by removing the budget for PR activity.
- 3.15. Support service costs is an increased budget that includes ESCC IT, personnel and financial support and the annual lump sum contribution of £4,400 into the ESCC pension scheme. An inflationary increase of 3% has been assumed.

Core budget – income

Summary

- 3.16. The draft budget shows the increased contribution from Defra and increased contributions from local authorities. The proportion of the Defra contribution allocated to the core budget has been increased to support the growth of the core team.

Defra

3.17. The 2023/24 core contribution is £252,900, an increase of £20,400 from 2022/23.

Local Authority contributions

3.18. The draft budget assumes an uplift to the core contributions of local authorities for 2022/23.

Other contributions

3.19. The draft budget assumes other contributions to the core budget of £5,300 from charges to projects for management, administration, and office costs.

Core budget - reserves

3.20. The JAC reserves at 31 March 2024 are estimated to be £232,500. The JAC continues to consider ways of reducing costs or increasing income. An office downsize remains an option for reducing costs. Redundancies would mean difficult decisions about the scope of Partnership's work.

Self-Funding Projects

3.21. The indicative Self-funding projects budget is attached at Appendix B. The Partnership's project budget is presented as four programmes; Community Engagement (education, access and health and well-being); Management Plan (research, evidence, consultation, and production); Landscape Enhancement (farming, nature recovery, climate change and flood management); and Farming in Protected Landscapes.

3.22. The project budget allows for 3.6FTE: Land Management project officers (1.2FTE), Deer co-ordinator (0.6FTE), Community engagement officer (0.6FTE), Senior Administrator (0.6FTE) and an Education officer (0.6FTE).

3.23. Local authority contributions are those made in prior years through the Project Enabling Fund or to specific projects, for example High Weald Heroes Education Programme.

3.24. The budget reflects the Committee's developing role in managing grant programmes on behalf of others and includes indicative expenditure under the Sussex Lund, National Grid Visual Impact Project, and the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

3.25. Most grant awards are paid retrospectively on project completion. The self-funding projects budget and outturn is therefore only indicative as grantees project completion dates can be unpredictable.

3.26. The Defra grant contribution allocated to Partnership Projects is £65,300.

4. FINANCIAL ISSUES 2024/25 AND BEYOND

- 4.1. A balanced position has been achieved for 2023/24 and another four years through increased contributions from Defra and local authorities.
- 4.2. The Defra contribution is conditional on match funding equivalent to 25% of the core funding in cash terms being secured from local authorities, such that Defra funding does not exceed 75% of the total Defra and local authority contribution. Increasing match funding levels is therefore essential.
- 4.3. The JAC needs to maintain a core team with sufficient capacity to carry out its core functions and realise external investment opportunities.
- 4.4. The JAC needs to retain a minimum reserve of £95,000 to meet redundancy costs.

5. RISKS

- 5.1. The risks and financial implication that the JAC will wish to note are that the core budget for 2023/24 assumes that:
 - Defra maintains funding to AONB Partnerships at 2022/23 levels.
 - Local authorities increase their core contributions to secure the additional Defra contribution for core activity and sustain the Partnership.
 - There will be no changes to salary-related assumptions that increase costs.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1. The JAC should note that the draft budget has been developed in a period of financial uncertainty which may affected the budget assumptions, and that initial consultation has indicated that not all local authorities support the flat-rate increase proposition.
- 6.2. The draft budget for self-financing projects assumes operation of four programmes in 2023/24. The scale of these programme is significant. The core budget needs to be maintained and increased if the Partnership wishes to retain the capacity to set up and run such programmes.
- 6.3. Support for the draft budget will provide the JAC with the capacity to deliver its key core functions in 2023/24.



Jill Fisher -Treasurer to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

2021/22		2022/23		2023/24					2024/25
Outturn £'000	Core Budget	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Original		Budget			Original
				Budget £'000	Inflation £'000	Pressures £'000	Other £'000	Budget £'000	Budget £'000
	Expenditure								
230.3	Staff costs	264.3	264.8	264.3	18.7	30.5	0.9	314.4	323.8
51.1	Accommodation/office equipment	34.3	32.6	34.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	35.3	36.4
5.6	Partnership running costs	6.8	8.0	6.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	7.0	7.2
31.7	Support services	31.7	31.7	31.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	32.7	33.7
318.8	Total Core Expenditure	337.1	337.1	337.1	20.9	30.5	0.9	389.4	401.1
	Income								
(232.5)	Defra	(232.5)	(252.9)	(232.5)	0.0	(20.4)	0.0	(252.9)	(252.9)
(22.4)	East Sussex County Council	(22.4)	(22.4)	(22.4)	0.0	(5.0)	0.0	(27.4)	(28.2)
(9.0)	Kent County Council	(9.0)	(9.0)	(9.0)	0.0	(5.0)	0.0	(14.0)	(14.4)
(9.3)	West Sussex County Council	(9.3)	(9.3)	(9.3)	0.0	(5.0)	0.0	(14.3)	(14.7)
(2.9)	Surrey County Council	(2.9)	(2.9)	(2.9)	0.0	(5.0)	0.0	(7.9)	(8.1)
(7.2)	Wealden District	(7.2)	(7.2)	(7.2)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(9.7)	(10.0)
(7.2)	Rother District Council	(7.2)	(7.2)	(7.2)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(9.7)	(10.0)
(5.6)	Mid Sussex District Council	(5.6)	(5.6)	(5.6)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(8.1)	(8.3)
(6.7)	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	(6.7)	(6.7)	(6.7)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(9.2)	(9.5)
(4.7)	Horsham District Council	(4.7)	(4.7)	(4.7)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(7.2)	(7.4)
(3.6)	Sevenoaks District Council	(3.6)	(3.6)	(3.6)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(6.1)	(6.3)
(0.8)	Ashford Borough Council	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.8)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(3.3)	(3.4)
(1.5)	Hastings Borough Council	(1.5)	(1.5)	(1.5)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(4.0)	(4.1)
(2.2)	Tandridge District Council	(2.2)	(2.2)	(2.2)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(4.7)	(4.8)
(0.3)	Crawley Borough Council	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(2.8)	(2.9)
(0.3)	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)	0.0	(2.5)	0.0	(2.8)	(2.9)
(14.7)	Other income	(9.8)	(9.8)	(9.8)	0.0	0.0	4.5	(5.3)	(13.2)
(330.9)	Total Core Income	(326.0)	(346.4)	(326.0)	0.0	(67.9)	4.5	(389.4)	(401.1)
12.1	Surplus/(deficit) transfer to/(from) reserves	(11.1)	9.2	(11.1)	(20.9)	37.4	(5.4)	0.0	(0.0)
0.0	Net Core Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Self Funding Projects								
	See Appendix C for detail								
588.3	JAC expenditure on self-funded projects	1,101.1	0.0	1,350.1				1,350.1	729.8
(72.8)	Defra contribution to self-funded projects (Excluding FiPL)	(45.0)	0.0	(65.3)				(65.3)	(285.6)
(163.5)	Defra contribution to FiPL Project	(709.8)	0.0	(999.3)				(999.3)	0.0
(42.6)	Local authorities contributions	(30.2)	0.0	(24.5)				(24.5)	(74.8)
(309.5)	Other contributions to self-funded projects	(316.1)	0.0	(261.0)				(261.0)	(369.4)
(0.0)	Net Self-Funded Project Budget	(0.0)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total High Weald JAC								
907.1	Total core and project expenditure	1,438.2	337.1	1,687.2	20.9	30.5	0.9	1,739.5	1,130.9
(907.1)	Total core and project income	(1,438.2)	(337.1)	(1,676.1)	0.0	(67.9)	4.5	(1,739.5)	(1,130.9)
(0.0)	Total High Weald JAC Budget	(0.0)	0.0	11.1	20.9	(37.4)	5.4	0.0	0.0

Defra Funding	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000
Defra funding on core budget	(232.5)	(252.9)
Defra funding on projects budget	(45.0)	(65.3)
Defra contribution to FiPL Project	(709.8)	(999.3)
Total Defra Funding	(987.3)	(1,317.5)

Reserves	£000
Reserves at 1st April 2021	211.2
Transfer to/(from)reserves 2021/22	12.1
Reserves at 31 March 2022	223.3
Transfer to/(from) reserves 2022/23	9.2
Reserves at 31 March 2023	232.5
Transfer to/(from) reserves 2023/24	0.0
Reserves at 31 March 2024	232.5

HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SELF FUNDING PROJECTS OUTTURN for 2022/23, BUDGET, FORECAST for 2023/24 & INDICATIVE BUDGET 2024/25

Appendix B

2021/22 Outturn £'000	Budget 2022/23			Forecast 2022/23			Indicative Budget 2023/24			Indicative Budget 2024/25		
	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
	1 Community Outreach											
0.0	JAC expenditure			184.7			20.8			240.3		
0.0	9.4	(8.5)			(184.7)			(14.0)			(232.5)	
0.0		0.0			0.0			(6.0)			(7.0)	
0.0		(0.9)			0.0			(0.8)			(0.8)	
0.0	Total Community Outreach			0.0			0.0			0.0		
	High Weald Heroes											
26.9	JAC expenditure			27.7			28.9			29.7		
(25.9)	26.7	(13.4)			(19.0)			(22.0)			(22.0)	
(43.9)		(13.3)			(8.7)			(6.9)			(7.7)	
42.9		0.0			0.0			0.0			0.0	
0.0	Total High Weald Heroes			0.0			0.0			0.0		
	2 Management Plan Evidence and Guidance											
18.3	JAC expenditure			12.0			25.0			25.0		
(18.3)	12.0	(12.0)			(12.0)			(12.0)			(12.0)	
0.0		0.0			0.0			(13.0)			(13.0)	
(0.0)	Total Management Plan Evidence and Guidance			0.0			0.0			0.0		
	3 Landscape Enhancement											
379.6	JAC expenditure			453.1			276.1			435		
(28.5)	337.2	(11.1)			(33.9)			(17.3)			(19.2)	
(32.5)		(32.5)			(32.5)			(14.1)			0.0	
1.3		(10.9)			(0.7)			(11.6)			(60.1)	
(120.0)		(20.8)			(34.4)			(47.4)			(20.6)	
(8.3)		0.0			0.0			0.0			0.0	
(8.6)		(81.9)			(146.6)			(0.7)			0.0	
(183.0)		(180.0)			(205.0)			(185.0)			(335.0)	
(0.0)	Total Landscape Enhancement			0.0			0.0			0.0		
	5 Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme											
163.5	JAC expenditure			709.7			999.3			0.0		
(163.5)	709.8	(709.8)			(709.7)			(999.3)			0.0	
0.0	Total Project Development			0.0			0.0			0.0		
	4 Project Development											
0.0	JAC expenditure			0.0			0.0			0.0		
0.0	6.0	0.0			0.0			0.0			0.0	
0.0		0.0			0.0			0.0			0.0	
0.0		(6.0)			0.0			0.0			0.0	
0.0	Total Project Development			0.0			0.0			0.0		
588.3	JAC expenditure (to Appendix B)			1,387.3			1,350.1			729.8		
(236.2)	1,101.1	(754.8)			(959.4)			(1,064.6)			(285.6)	
(42.6)		(30.2)			(9.4)			(24.5)			(74.8)	
(309.5)		(316.1)			(418.5)			(261.0)			(369.4)	
0.0	TOTAL JAC expenditure/income			0.0			0.0			0.0		
	1,101.1	(1,101.1)	0.0	1,387.3	(1,387.3)	0.0	1,350.1	(1,350.1)	0.0	729.8	(729.8)	0.0

Agenda Item: 10

Committee:	High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Date:	23 November 2022
Title of Report:	High Weald AONB Partnership's direction and resourcing
By:	AONB Director
Purpose:	To provide further context for the draft budget 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to support:

1. the Management Board's rationale for an increase in local authority contributions in 2023/24 and an annual inflationary increase in contributions from 2024/25.
-

1. APPRAISAL

- 1.1. Total local authority contributions to the High AONB Partnership in 2022/23 are £83,700, the same as 20 years ago (Appendix A).
- 1.2. Following a business/budget review, the Management Board recommends a one-off uplift in local authority contributions in 2023/24 and an annual inflationary increase in contributions from 2024/25.
- 1.3. The recommendation will ensure the resilience of the Partnership and its core staff.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. The JAC has been in existence for 30 years and all 15 local authority partners have provided financial support over that period.
- 2.2. Current local authority contributions to the AONB Partnership were agreed as part of the 4-year Service Level Agreement 2019-2024. The contributions are guided by a percentage formula agreed by the Partnership at its inception.
- 2.3. Normally local authority contributions would be reviewed prior to the agreement of the next Service Level Agreement. However, an early review has been prompted by:
 - The five-year budget forecast (Appendix B) which highlights an increasing budget deficit (amplified by the recently agreed 2022/23 pay award)
 - The uplift in Defra's contribution to the JAC Partnership in 2022/23 of £40,667 p.a., subject to matching third party contributions.

- The need to invest in the core team to sustain a core service, as well realise the investment opportunities that deliver AONB Management Plan objectives.

3. STATUTORY DUTIES

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

Section 82 affirms the primary purpose of AONBs to conserve and enhance natural beauty

Section 84 confirms the powers of local authorities to take all such action expedient to achieve the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty

Section 85 places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to *have regard* to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. This duty is in addition to the power under section 84 (above)

Section 89 creates a statutory responsibility for local authorities to produce and review AONB management plans, where appropriate acting jointly. Management Plans formulate the local authorities policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it.

- 3.2 Through the High Weald AONB Partnership local authorities are provided with specialist advice and support fulfilling these duties. Many other bodies, including parish councils, also benefit from this support. The statutory management plan is produced jointly, ensuring consistent policy across the AONB.
- 3.3 The Partnership's staff team also facilitate delivery of the Plan, routinely securing significant investment in the area. The team also, through the National Association of AONBs, advises national policy-makers on the support needed to achieve the purposes of AONB designation and fulfil statutory duties.
- 3.4 The AONB Partnership's annual review highlights the breadth and depth of the work that is driven by its staff team.

4. PARTNERSHIP DIRECTION 2025 onwards

- 4.1 The High Weald landscape is facing a scale of change that hasn't been experienced for 60 years; from unprecedented development pressure and rapidly changing land management practices, to dealing with both climate change and ecological collapse and achieving carbon net zero.
- 4.2 The 2019 Landscapes (Glover) Review report set out the role AONB landscapes should play within society. It recognised the value and cost effectiveness of AONB Partnerships, but also set out new ambitions for those Partnerships.

- 4.3 Defra has responded to the recommendations of the Review by increasing core funding by 15% and securing significant funds from within Defra for AONB Management Plan delivery to 2025 (over £2 million for the High Weald AONB Partnership).
- 4.4 A briefing (Appendix C) sent to all JAC members and officers in June highlights the direction the AONB Partnership could take to respond to this context.

5. REVIEW

- 5.1 At the March 2022 meeting JAC Members asked the Management Board to review the Partnership's budget.
- 5.2 At the Management Board meeting in June, the Members discussed the business direction and the five-year budget based on current contributions.
- 5.3 Members strongly felt that contributions to the Partnership need to:
- reflect the value and cost savings of the AONB team producing a statutory AONB Management Plan on behalf of 15 local authorities
 - recognise the value of the considerable external funds being directed into local authority areas owing to the existence of the AONB Partnership
 - acknowledge the increasing demand from all stakeholders (local authority officers, residents, private and public bodies, and government agencies) for the AONB Partnership's services
 - be meaningful.
- 5.4 A flat rate increase to local authority contributions, £5,000 for county councils and £2,500 for district/borough council was proposed and agreed by Members. This level of increase was considered necessary to deliver services and allow a balanced budget over 5 years.
- 5.5 The Chair of the JAC subsequently wrote to all local authorities with the proposal, providing an opportunity for local authorities to consider the proposal prior to local authority budget setting periods.
- 5.6 Nine authorities responded to this initial consultation: six authorities have agreed to the flat rate proposal; three advised they would consider an increase based on the percentage of their area in the AONB. Most recognised the need for an inflationary increase (proposing the level of increase should be reviewed annually).
- 5.7 The Management Board considered the responses at their meeting in October, including an option for contributions to be based on the 2001/02 formula. Following a discussion Members were unanimous in the view that a flat rate contribution for membership of the Partnership was appropriate, in addition to the area-based contribution.
- 5.8 The draft budget for 2023/24 is based on this view.

6. RISKS

6.1. The risks and financial implication that the JAC will wish to note are that:

- The budget review, and the Management Board decision to ask for increased contributions, was initiated before the current global/national financial crisis. Local authorities will be considering the JAC's annual budget consultation within that context.
- Not all authorities responded to the initial consultation, therefore the Management Board was unable to consider their views.
- Without a sustainable core team the Partnership will need to scale back its activity turning down requests for specialist advice and will be unable to facilitate and secure investment in the AONB landscape to support rural economy, carbon net zero, nature recovery, access and health and well-being

7. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The AONB Partnership has operated successfully for 30 years, attracting significant levels of external funding from a range of sources to supplement core contributions.

7.2 Securing unanimous support for any proposal from 15 local authority partners, given their individual circumstances, is difficult. The budget review recommendation is guided by a consideration of the options, the positive response from 50% of the membership to the initial consultation, and the value Management Board members feel local authorities should place on a nationally important landscape and the work of its dedicated Partnership.

Jason Lavender/Sally Marsh – Director to the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Appendix A

High Weald JAC budget history 2001/02 to 2022/23

Local authority	MoA % 2001/2002	Contribution 2001/2002 (baseline)	Contribution 2022/2023	Variance between 2001 and 2023
East Sussex County Council	25	20.95	22.40	1.46
Kent County Council	15	12.57	9.00	-3.57
West Sussex County Council	11	9.22	9.30	0.08
Surrey County Council	3	2.51	2.90	0.39
	54			
Wealden District	8	6.70	7.20	0.50
Rother District Council	8	6.70	7.20	0.50
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	7	5.86	6.70	0.84
Mid Sussex District Council	6	5.03	5.60	0.57
Ashford Borough Council	2	1.68	0.80	-0.88
Sevenoaks District Council	4	3.35	3.60	0.25
Horsham District Council	5	4.19	4.70	0.51
Tandridge District Council	2	1.68	2.20	0.52
Hastings Borough Council	2	1.68	1.50	-0.18
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	1	0.84	0.30	-0.54
Crawley Borough Council	1	0.84	0.30	-0.54
	46	83.78	83.70	-0.08
LA contributions if contributions had remained in line with inflation as per Bank of England inflation calculator (based on CPI)				140.08

Briefing



For Members of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee Request for an increase in local authority contributions to the AONB Partnership

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a nationally important, much-loved, and precious part of the English countryside.

For 30 years, fifteen local authorities, through the High Weald AONB Partnership, have worked together to care for the area: conserving and enhancing the High Weald and furthering public understanding and enjoyment of it.

The Partnership has an excellent track record. We provide landscape-led advice, co-ordinate landscape-focused work across the area and have set up and run innovative partnership projects, many nationally acclaimed. We produce the statutory AONB Management Plan every five years on behalf of local authority members, and routinely attract significant levels of external funding for delivery of the Plan.

In an average year, we:

- Provide landscape-led advice to over 70 organisations and partnerships (nationally and locally)
- Undertake 175 advisory visits with land managers, with over 50% seeking follow-up support
- Respond to 300 policy and development-related consultations
- Produce three new High Weald-specific guidance documents
- Work with 25 primary schools, delivering 80 events with 2,300 pupils
- Run 15 training events with over 250 attendees and the annual High Weald Walking Festival
- Manage five partnership projects focused on community engagement and/or land management
- Award 75 grants to achieve landscape, nature recovery and climate change objectives, with an approximate total value of £300,000.

These achievements are possible because of local authority members unwavering support for the Partnership over many years.

Local authorities, and the Partnership, are now in a new era. There are urgent goals to improve the health and wellbeing of communities, recover nature, and combat climate change, as well as the need to continue to protect the AONB's special character for future generations.

An independent review of the country's protected landscapes, commissioned by Government, recommended that the network of National Parks and AONBs should form the backbone of efforts to achieve these goals. **As one of the country's largest protected landscapes, the High Weald AONB, and its Partnership, has a leading role to play.**

Additional investment in the Partnership is being sought for an ambitious new direction that responds to these goals. With support from Government and local authorities the Partnership plans to:

- Prepare and publish the highly valued statutory **AONB Management Plan** on behalf of local authorities. Through consultation the Plan will set out shared objectives to protect the High Weald's distinctive landscape and actions that will achieve food and energy security, nature recovery, improved health and well-being, climate change resilience and transition to a low carbon economy within the High Weald.
- Provide landscape-led advice and guidance on the impact of land use and development proposals on the AONB's landscape, helping with **sustainable development**. We will do this through consultations, training events, site visits, AONB-specific research, technical guidance and sharing

AONB data. We will highlight how development can be suited to both the area's character and achieve local authorities' nature recovery and climate change goals in the High Weald.

- Take a lead in **celebrating landscape beauty**, helping local communities understand, enjoy, and take action to care for the area. We will continue to provide guidance to parishes; facilitate community projects, for example Dark Sky surveys and events; and provide grant-aid to community-led projects. We will develop new partnerships with the arts sector to reach **a wider and more diverse range of people**.
- Help farmers and foresters transform their management practices to achieve **net zero, restore nature, reduce flood and drought risk, and conserve landscape features**, whilst also producing nutrient-dense food and sustainable timber. We will promote the landscape's suitability for regenerative farming and rewilding, provide inspiration and practical support at demonstration sites, run the nationally acclaimed Princes Resilience Training programme, and provide grant-aid to farmer-led projects.
- Facilitate initiatives that help landowners work together to **recover nature** in our woods, fields, and rivers at a meaningful scale. We will do this by bringing people together to help turn ideas into projects and secure resources. We will seek to improve the financial viability of the land-based sector through these initiatives to ensure a **vibrant land-based economy**.
- Welcome a **wider and more diverse range of people** to the High Weald countryside through a new project that will remove barriers to accessing the area. We want everyone to be welcome in our special landscape and for it to be a positive force to improve the **health and wellbeing** of our residents and those living in the towns close to the AONB. We will also launch a more accessible website and build on the popular annual High Weald Walking Festival to highlight the area as a visitor destination.
- Involve **future generations** by helping primary schools in and around the AONB connect children to the countryside on their doorstep through indoor and outdoor learning that adds value to the curriculum with a particular emphasis on healthy lifestyles and responsible access. We will create a new internship role for those seeking a career in the environmental sector.
- **Advocate nationally for policy and resources** that help the area's local authorities, land managers and communities achieve the purposes of AONB designation.

Feedback from stakeholders:

"The Plan, including the section on AONB policy and the legal framework, add to the AONB policies of the NPPF, and reflect the AONB at the local level – the management plan is a significant material planning consideration in planning work and planning decisions".

"Thank you for your support over the last few years. It has been so valuable in moving our farming practice to more nature friendly methods and alignment to the AONB landscape. I'll keep my eye on events of course!"

"I see the festival as the highlight of the year. A great way to spend tax-payers money especially bearing in mind the spirit of volunteers who themselves enable these walks to reflect well on the councils involved. High praise to all volunteers, THANK YOU ALL. Mental health is a priority and events like this go a long way to helping people in this area."

"Just a quick note of thanks for sharing the stone age handling boxes with the Y3s and Y4s this week. They thoroughly enjoyed the session and I know they learned a lot from the hands-on experience. You also gave me ideas in terms of carrying the learning in this topic forward which is always really helpful. You offer a unique and valuable experience during these sessions. May it long continue."

Agenda Item: 12

Committee: High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Date: 23 November 2022

Title of Report: Risk Management

By: AONB Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the report and;
 2. Request that the Management Board continues to work with the AONB Unit to consider the risks and identify measures and options to manage and mitigate the effect of these risks.
-

1.0 Background

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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. The most significant risk to the High Weald AONB partnership remains the increasing constraints and demands placed on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit.
- 1.3 The key risks to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) are set out in Appendix A.

2.0 Key risks 2022/23 and beyond

COVID-19

- 2.1 COVID-19 still represents a risk to people's health, and it is still a priority to ensure the staff and those we work with are kept safe and the opportunities for passing on the virus and its variants are kept to an absolute minimum.
- 2.2 COVID-19 has disrupted both our business planning and working arrangements since the start of 2020, and this is likely to continue to some extent. Inevitably this has had an impact on our work programme and the AONB Unit staff.

Core budget funding settlement

- 2.3 Members will be aware that since 2010 the English AONB partnerships have accommodated a 36% cut in the government contribution to the core budgets. The total core funding from the government for all the 34 English AONBs is only half the core funding provided to a single National Park Authority. During this same period most of the local authority partners on the High Weald AONB partnership have maintained their contributions to the core budget, albeit without an increase in line with inflation.
- 2.4 The worsening financial situation's influence on the government's policies and priorities for our sector remain considerable. The government's recent stated intention to impose further public spending cuts and make decisions of "eye-watering difficulty" will have significant consequences for the future funding and support provided by government and local authorities.
- 2.5 There is a major risk to the core work of the High Weald AONB partnership should the current funding situation continue or worsen, and should the government choose not to re-instate a stable and predictable funding settlement for AONB partnerships.
- 2.6 This will be exacerbated should the government require AONB partnerships to undertake further duties as part of the government's response to the Landscapes Review but fail to provide adequate, commensurate, and sustained resources. As reported at the last JAC meeting, the government's intentions on a stable and adequate funding settlement for the sector continue to be unclear.

Self-funded projects

- 2.7 Every year the AONB team secures and manages significant amounts of external funds to support residents, schools, farmers, community groups, and others with a range of projects throughout the AONB under four main programmes; Community Engagement (education, access and health and well-being); Management Plan (research, evidence, consultation, and production); Landscape Enhancement (farming, nature recovery, climate change and flood management); and Farming in Protected Landscapes. In addition, the AONB team administers and manages grant programmes on behalf of others (e.g. Sussex Lund, National Grid) which also bring considerable benefits across the AONB.
- 2.8 As with the core budget settlement, there is a major risk to the on-going management and success of these self-funding programmes should the existing constraints on the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit continue or worsen.

New and greater expectations and demands

- 2.9 The last two to three years have seen a greater pressure on the High Weald landscape along with several increasing and new expectations placed on the AONB Unit. These extra and new demands requiring the AONB Unit's attention present a significant risk to the existing core work and remit of the AONB Unit. New demands include:
- The considerable rise in the numbers and the scale of housing development applications (particularly for major developments) affecting the AONB. Residents, consultants, local authority officers and Members are increasingly seeking our specialist advice, guidance, and input

- Greater efforts by public organisations, the statutory undertakers, and others to meet their statutory duties towards the conservation of the AONB and their emerging climate change and nature recovery policies has resulted in an increasing demand for our advice and guidance
- The transition to the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELM) or something similar will require farmers to change their practices and demand is increasing for our guidance to help them achieve the multiple objectives ELM will expect
- The changing nature of landownership in the High Weald is a growing factor and new and inexperienced owners need tailored and integrated guidance and longer-term assistance to help them manage their farms and woodlands responsibly, and to prevent harm to the High Weald
- The expectation that more needs to be done to encourage a wider and more diverse range of people, and better public access to and enjoyment of the countryside requires our input and involvement
- Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) has placed considerable demands on our existing resources - the setting up and managing a suitable governance structure and a grant administration system and the use of existing AONB staff to implement the scheme's objectives and support farmers and land managers submit strong grant applications

Staff succession planning

- 2.10 The majority of the AONB Unit staff are aging and staff succession planning is becoming a more important issue. The recruitment and retention of younger people and those with the relevant skills and experience is increasingly difficult for a variety of reasons. A failure to address this will be a risk to the future success of the AONB partnership and the work of the AONB Unit.

3.0 Risk mitigation

COVID-19

- 3.1 We continue to monitor the situation closely and have put in place a range of appropriate measures to ensure the AONB Unit staff and those we work with are as safe as possible. Measures are in place to keep our key functions running and to manage the team, and to allow partners, residents, and others to continue to work with us.
- 3.2 The office at Flimwell has remained open and most of the staff continue to work from the office with the option to work at home. Meetings and events are held either in-person or on-line, and school visits have been resumed where the teachers are happy to do so. Site, farm, and woodland advisory visits have continued with appropriate measures.

Core budget funding settlement, self-funded projects, and new expectations and demands

- 3.3 The continuing financial and resources predicament facing the English AONB partnerships and exacerbated by recent events has yet to be addressed by the government. By necessity,

the need for an adequate, long-term, and stable funding settlement is the primary concern of the High Weald AONB partnership.

- 3.4 Our experience dealing with the funding cuts since 2009 reminds us that all members of the High Weald AONB partnership will need to continue to demonstrate at the local and national government level the value and the worth of the work the AONB partnership does and lobby for adequate and stable long-term funding.
- 3.5 The development of secure and alternative long-term income streams to support the core remit of the AONB partnership may be possible. However, the difficulties achieving this are often under-estimated and any funds raised are unlikely to address any longer-term shortfall in contributions to our core budget. The focus is to remain a governmental and local authority supported partnership with a close relationship to government bodies whose policies influence management of the AONB landscape.
- 3.6 The High Weald AONB Unit's business strategy 2019 – 2024 aims to respond to the risks caused by the constraints on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit. It will be adapted to accommodate the emerging risks associated the greater pressures placed on the High Weald and the newer expectations and demands. The specific risks associated with the larger projects and grant schemes (e.g. FiPL) will continue to be assessed.
- 3.7 However, the assumption that the current and inadequate resources available to the High Weald AONB partnership can continue to cover the current and emerging demands while also meeting the government's stated vision that AONB partnerships are at the heart of nature recovery, landscape conservation, and climate change mitigation will need to be challenged. Asking the AONB partnership to do more with less is no longer a viable option.

Staff succession planning

- 3.8 Identifying and implementing a process and strategy for succession planning should allow us to develop existing and new members of staff who can move into leadership roles when they become vacant. Succession planning will also help us attract, recruit, and retain younger people and those with the appropriate skills to work for the AONB Unit.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 Risk management systems are in place and conform to the appropriate East Sussex County Council policy.
- 4.2 It is clear the rest of 2022-23 will continue to be characterised by the challenges outlined above. The constraints on both the financial and personnel resources of the AONB Unit remain the most significant risk to the core work of the High Weald AONB partnership.
- 4.3 The High Weald AONB Unit's current business strategy is tailored to the High Weald's local circumstances and specific needs. It aims to address the risks to the work of the High Weald AONB partnership, but this is no longer enough. The expectation that the partnership can continue to absorb the existing and additional demands without adequate resources needs to be challenged and then addressed.

Contact: Jason Lavender High Weald AONB Co-Director
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Appendix A High Weald JAC - COVID-19 Key Risks 23.11.22

Sponsor: Sally Marsh/Jason Lavender

Author: Jason Lavender

Date: March 2022 - November 2022

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 What can go wrong	Root Causes How it can go wrong	Owner	Inherent Risk			Controls / Mitigating Actions Preventative & reactive control measures	Control Owner	Residual Risk		
					Likelihood	Consequence	Matrix Zone			Control Rating	Likelihood	Consequence
		Format: EVENT leading to CONSEQUENCE resulting in EFFECT ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES										
	1	Infection by COVID-19 and subsequent illness.	AONB staff and those we work with falling ill as a result of COVID-19.	AONB Director	4	2	Amber	Follow government and ESCC guidance and also set up and maintain a variety of measures to ensure the AONB Unit staff and those we work with are as safe as possible. For more detail see paragraph 3.1 of the COVID-19 Risk Management report.	AONB Director	2	4	Amber

2	Failure to meet current and revised work commitments and work programmes, unable to support individuals and organisations with their projects, difficulty securing funds to match external grants or to fund projects. AONB Unit staff unable to manage work commitments and caring duties. Recruitment of new staff suspended for the foreseeable future.	Reduced activity/service owing to changed working arrangements (internally and externally), inability to recruit new staff, additional caring duties for children and/or elderly relatives, and staff illness or absence (e.g. to assist with emergency planning).	AONB Director	3	3	Amber	Work primarily from home, maintain contact with colleagues, partners, and others, adapt work programmes to meet existing commitments and priorities where possible, and review work programmes regularly to reflect changing circumstances. For more detail see paragraph 3.4 of the COVID-19 Risk Management report.	AONB Director	2	3	2	Amber
3	Those receiving grants from the JAC are unable to start or progress and complete their projects within the agreed timescales.	Restrictions placed on people's movements and activities, labour and material shortages, rising costs.	AONB Director	4	4	Red	Consult with the grant recipients and third party funders, review and change timescales, offer technical advice and moral support.	AONB Director	2	4	2	Amber
4	Remote IT working systems fail and/or needs not met, staff unable to work efficiently, fewer outputs, current and revised work programmes compromised.	Poor links to computer network/server results in slow machine operation, inability to download GIS data, update website etc.	AONB Director	2	3	Green	Technical advice sought and recommendations/solutions implemented.	AONB Director	2	2	2	Green
5	Failure to secure/receive adequate, stable, and long-term funding to the core budget. A reduction or loss of national and local government political and financial support to the AONB partnerships.	Adverse affect to the AONB core work remit and much reduced capacity and time to raise other funds to support core work and raise funds for project work.	AONB Director	4	5	Red	Continued and concerted engagement with national and local government and government agencies and ongoing liaison with the NAAONB. 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 MPs.	AONB Director	3	4	4	Red