

# High Weald AONB Management Plan Review Process including Timetable



## Introduction

Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 requires local authorities to review AONB Management Plans every 5 years. The current High Weald AONB Management Plan expires on the 31 March 2014 and a review process is underway.

## Review Scope

The first statutory Management Plan, published in 2004, was a 20-year strategy and set long-term objectives for the conservation of the High Weald's natural beauty. The Plan was designed as a concise document, supported by background information held and regularly updated on the AONB website, with a view to minimising the task of updating the main document. In November 2011, the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) agreed the scope of the 2014 review. The objective-led approach, philosophy, natural beauty components and overall structure of the Management Plan remain unchanged. The main components of the 2014 review are:

- a check that the objectives are still fit for purpose;
- necessary amendments to reflect changes in legislation, policy and organisational roles;
- monitoring the plan performance since the last review to establish its effectiveness and delivery;
- preparation of a Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA), as required under European legislation to assess the Plan's environmental credentials.
- updating of facts and figures that describe the socio-economic and ecological profile of the area;
- a review of the issues likely to impact on the AONB over the next five years;
- revision of the 5 year targets;
- public consultation on the revised Plan.

## Management Plan Review Timetable

March to May 2012	The AONB Management Plan 2009–2014 is examined and the scope of the changes required assessed. Condition and Performance monitoring and SEA and AA processes start.
June 2012	The High Weald JAC's Management Board approves the review scoping.
July to Sept. 2012	A review of issues & options is undertaken.

## Review Process including Timetable

October 2012	The JAC approves a report that recommends that the scope of the review should be 'light touch': there being no need for a more fundamental or extensive review. The JAC agrees that the formal review process should proceed.
Nov. 2012 to Feb. 2013	Initial changes to the text to be made and circulated to local authority partners, technical experts and key stakeholders for comment. Further changes to the text to be made and the changes circulated and discussed by the High Weald Local Authority Officer's Steering Group. Draft SEA and AA reports to be produced.
March to May 2013	The <i>Draft</i> Management Plan text, and the accompanying <i>Draft</i> SEA, AA and condition and performance monitoring reports, to be approved by the JAC for public consultation.
June to July 2013	A public consultation on the <i>Draft</i> Management Plan 2014–2019 to take place and to provide an opportunity for everybody to inspect and comment on the Plan before it is finalised and adopted. The <i>Draft</i> SEA, AA and condition and performance monitoring reports to also be available for inspection and comment.
August to Sept. 2013	Comments from the public consultation to be considered and the Plan revised where appropriate. The <i>Final</i> Management Plan 2014–2019 to then be examined and agreed by the High Weald Local Authority Officer's Steering Group and Natural England.
November 2013	A report to the JAC to recommend they formally adopt the <i>Final</i> Management Plan 2014–2019.
Dec. 2013 to March 2014	The <i>Final</i> Management Plan 2014–2019 to go to each of the constituent local authorities for adoption through their processes. Also to be sent to the Secretary of State for approval.
April 2014	The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014–2019 becomes operative and is publicly available via <a href="http://www.highweald.org">www.highweald.org</a> .

### The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

The High Weald JAC is a partnership of: Kent, Surrey, East and West Sussex County Councils; Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, Crawley, Tonbridge & Malling and Hastings Borough Councils; Wealden, Rother, Horsham, Mid Sussex, Sevenoaks, and Tandridge District Councils; Natural England; and other organisations representing farming, forestry, community, business and recreation interests.

The local authorities work jointly through the JAC and its specialist staff team (the High Weald AONB Unit) to produce the High Weald AONB Management Plan and enable its implementation.



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