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| <p><u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 9 February 2010</p> | <p><u>Item</u> 6</p> |
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DRAFT SUSTAINABILITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

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Summary

This paper presents a renewed and updated Sustainability Policy and Action Plan.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended, subject to comments, to approve the updated policy and action plan.

Background

1. The earlier policy and action plan focussed almost exclusively on environmental aspects, with little on the local economy and community. With the development of work on the Sustainable Development Fund and Sustainable Business Scheme, we have become more aware of a need to have in place a good policy and plan of our own. It is anticipated that we will be able to use this as a model to encourage other organisations to adopt something similar.

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| <p>List of Background Papers Sustainability Policy approved by AONB Partnership Oct 2004.</p> |
| <p>Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> |
| <p>Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p> |
| <p>Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p> |
| <p>Community / Consultations Appraisal Much of the content of the policy and action plan has been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.</p> |
| <p>Appendices Appendix 1 Draft Sustainability Policy and Action Plan</p> |

Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

The core purpose of the AONB is environmental (to conserve and enhance natural beauty), and while the Partnership's work is focussed on the landscape it is important that this is carried out in a manner which is sustainable in relation to other environmental aspects such as energy and use of resources, and to the local economy and community. An explicit subsidiary purpose of the AONB is to promote sustainable development, which stresses balancing economic, social and environmental factors and taking a long term view of the needs of future generations. Climate change rightly has come to have a high profile recently, but is only one of a range of crucial issues about how we can live in balance with our environment – including food, water, population and levels of consumption, and our reliance on oil. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is committed to keeping this wider environmental, economic and social context at the heart of our work to conserve the area. The Partnership will pursue sustainability both through managing our own resources and through influencing others.

Managing our own resources

The resources the AONB Partnership controls are modest – a small rented office, two cars, and limited procurement of materials. The finances and property of the Partnership are held by Shropshire Council as the host authority, which has its own corporate sustainability policy.

The AONB Partnership undertakes to:

- **Manage its own resources to minimise environmental impact and optimise local economic and community benefit.**
- **Measure and monitor key impacts in order to maintain focus on more important issues, and reduce CO₂ emissions from its direct activities by 25% by 2015 from a baseline figure established in 2006.**
- **Publicise the actions it is taking in order to encourage others.**

Influencing others

Given the way the AONB Partnership works, it has the greatest capacity to support sustainability through influencing others.

The AONB Partnership undertakes to:

- **Include broader sustainability issues in its work, and show how these relate to the primary landscape conservation purpose of the AONB.**
- **Promote and support policies and strategies affecting the AONB which support sustainability.**
- **Use its influence through distribution of grants, especially the Sustainable Development Fund, to support the achievement of real improvements in sustainability in the area.**
- **Encourage and support action by individuals and organisations in the community in and around the AONB to reduce CO₂ emissions, especially through energy efficiency and the appropriate development of renewable energy.**

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership – Sustainability Action Plan based on checklist of some key aspects of sustainability

| | Managing our own resources | | Influencing others | |
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| | Current activity | Priority action | Current activity | Priority action |
| ENVIRONMENTAL | | | | |
| Energy use and carbon footprint (including energy efficiency, transport, renewables) | Efficient use of electrical equipment, switch off policy Car sharing & public transport Designated Green Office champion | Low energy lighting tubes Turn down thermostat Further draughtproofing/ insulation | Website info – links and case studies Provision of Shuttles bus service Management Plan & advocacy work | More on Low Carbon & Resilience Fund energy projects & work on greenhouse gas emissions from land management |
| Waste reduction, recycling, minimising pollution | Office & kitchen recycling Use of recycled printer paper | Reduce non- environmentally friendly chemicals e.g. cleaning | Business waste & recycling project Rivers project with water quality focus | Continue |
| Resources – reducing, re-using, recycling. Local and sustainable procurement. | Duplex printing Optimise use of electronic storage | Work to reduce/ minimise printing | Sustainable Business Scheme (SBS) (relevant also to other headings) | Develop Sustainable Business Scheme |
| Wildlife and landscape | (no direct control of wildlife/ landscape resources) | - | This is the key focus of our core and project delivery work – many areas of activity | Landscape scale activity, especially Long Mynd – Stiperstones, Clun catchment |
| Raising environmental awareness | Posters & material in office for staff & visitors Publicity for 10:10 | Collate 10:10 information and promote | Promotion work – publications, web, events, etc | Improve effectiveness through new Communications Strategy |
| SOCIAL | | | | |
| Community participation – involvement, consultation, under-represented groups | Involvement of Team and Partnership members in sustainability issues | - | Support for community projects, SDF, LEADER, Friends of Shropshire Hills, events, Youthful Landscapes project | Support new groups and develop full potential of LEADER Encourage new applicants to SDF |
| Community benefits – local structures, skills, capacity, quality of life | Wide involvement of local people in AONB Partnership Craven Arms links especially through Discovery Centre | Continue | Support for community projects as above Land, Life & Livelihoods project | Develop full potential of LEADER LEADER wellbeing toolkit |
| Cultural heritage | Maintenance of tenanted Listed Building | Continue | Some project work | Develop/ support new initiatives |
| ECONOMIC | | | | |
| Local economy – goods & services | Use of local caterers and venues | Seek to optimise local procurement | Management Plan & advocacy work Buy Local work, Farmers Markets, etc | Seek greater economic focus from SDF |
| Employment | Externally funded projects have created new jobs Hosting business advice clinics | Continue | Promotion of environmental economy approaches Work on sustainable tourism | Continue and build up evidence base |
| Support for rural industries of the Shropshire Hills | (see project work influencing others) | - | Farmers’ Dens and advice clinics Woodlands project - supply chain Management Plan & advocacy work | Expand project work, including farmer engagement project |
| Value for money – cost effectiveness, varied sources of funding | Natural England funding, local authorities, LEADER and others | Seek sponsorship funding for SDF | Grants given encourage others to source further match funding Ensure high standards of projects given grant support | Continue |