



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 19 October 2010	Item 8
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UPDATE AND PROGRESS REPORT ON AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN ACTIONS

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Summary

This paper presents a draft of the annual update of the Management Plan Actions, for comment and endorsement.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to provide comments on the draft, and endorse it for publication.

Background

1. The Management Plan Actions have generally been updated every year. The gap this time is slightly longer, since the publication of the Management Plan in May 2009. A progress column is included reporting against the Actions, and some Actions have been added or amended. Space does not allow reporting in fine detail, but comments members have will be very welcome on aspects of progress or other suggested changes to Actions (e.g. wording, partners, timescale, priority, etc). Good progress has been made overall, though future implementation of many Actions will depend on funding cuts and restructuring of public sector organisations.

List of Background Papers Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14
Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
Community / Consultations Appraisal The Management Plan was the subject of extensive consultations through its preparation. The content of the update is based on discussions with partners.
Appendices Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan Actions Update October 2010

Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14

Management Plan Actions Update, October 2010



Introduction

The Management Plan Actions is a prioritised delivery framework with a three to five year time horizon, reviewed annually on a rolling basis. For ease of updating it is printed separately to the rest of the Management Plan. There is a huge amount of activity in the area by a wide variety of parties which supports the objectives of the AONB Management Plan. The Management Plan Actions does not attempt to be comprehensive, but serves as a useful co-ordinating framework, drawing together those activities which are most significant in achieving the AONB's aims. Things which are already happening are included as well as new proposed or aspirational actions. The Management Plan itself is not a direct funding stream or single defined programme, and not all of the Actions are necessarily carried out with the AONB primarily in mind.

The lead responsibility for many of the Actions lies with organisations which are members of the Partnership, as well as with the Partnership itself. In some cases the inclusion in the Plan of an Action already being undertaken will highlight to those responsible its relevance to the AONB, and may allow adjustment or targeting of that activity to increase the benefit to the AONB. The way Actions are defined aims to balance a useful level of detail for those with a particular area of interest, with providing a reasonably accessible overview of work to support the Management Plan's aims. The Management Plan Actions provides a mechanism for reporting progress, and will be updated annually with progress reports and addition of new Actions.

Background and rationale behind the Actions described here is contained within the full AONB Management Plan, and in papers relating to meetings of the AONB Partnership, both of which are available at www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk or from the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, The Old Post Office, Shrewsbury Road, Craven Arms, SY7 9NZ. Tel 01588 674080, email shaonbo@shropshire.gov.uk.

Reading the Management Plan Actions

Actions regarded as a high priority are shown with a shaded background. In the 'Lead and key partners' column, the lead party (or parties) is shown in bold, and other key partners in plain text ('key' partners means that the list is not necessarily comprehensive). A glossary of abbreviations used for organisations is appended.

The role of the AONB Partnership has been identified in relation to each Action, as either:

- *Lead* – work the Partnership does through its staff team and with others,
- *Enable* – things we bring others together to make happen,
- *Support* – things we help others to do, or
- *Encourage* – things we promote as good practice in relation to AONB management.

Ref.	Action (High priority actions shown with shaded background)	Status	Lead and key partners	Target timescale	Officer	Update on progress
<i>A number of actions listed below are key delivery mechanisms for the AONB and support many objectives.</i>						
<i>Other actions may support more than one objective but are listed under the one most relevant.</i>						
0.1	Continue the Shropshire Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund, seeking additional sources of funding.	In progress	AONB, NE, SCC	2009-14	CL	£66,129 awarded in grants to 23 projects in 2009-10. £39,863 offered in grants to 16 projects in 2010-11.
0.2	Implement LEADER in the Shropshire Hills, focussing on wellbeing and connections to the landscape.	In progress	AONB, LAs, AWM	2009-13	PB	Local Action Group structures and grant procedures have been established, and at Oct 2010 £647,811 of grants has been allocated to 16 projects.
0.3	Operate agri-environment schemes, targeting particular features and qualities of the AONB, and working with partners to optimise benefits to the AONB.	In progress	NE, AONB	Ongoing	PH	Uptake of Higher Level Stewardship continues to be high in the AONB. Many ESA agreements expire in 2013. Upland Entry Level Stewardship is under way, with the first agreements in July 2010.
0.4	Operate the English Woodland Grant Scheme, to support the appropriate planting and management of woodlands.	Ongoing role	FC, NE	2009-14	BB	Scheme continues, with significant uptake in the AONB, and recent addition of a Woodland Improvement Grant for birds.
0.5	Develop membership and activities of the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme.	In progress	AONB	2009-14	CF	Graduate post working on Business Scheme since Nov 2009. 91 members at Sept 2010. LEADER funding secured for development under 'Discover Local' project. Joint promotion of Buy Local businesses has been negotiated with All the Little Shops (an e-commerce company).
OBJECTIVE 1 To co-ordinate among partner organisations the holding, improvement and application of						
relevant data about the special qualities of the AONB and influences on it.						
1.1	Establish annual reporting on headline indicators of AONB condition.	Aspiration	AONB, NE, WMRO, SC	2009-14	PH	Issues of data availability mean that annual reporting is not likely to be possible. Replace with 5 year reporting on Management Plan cycle.
1.2	Develop the Shropshire Ecological Data Network and public access to information through www.naturalshropshire.co.uk.	In progress	SC, SWT, RGs, AONB	2009-14	PH	Significant improvements made to numbers and accessibility of records, both through naturalshropshire and the National Biodiversity Network.
1.3	Ensure mechanisms for keeping data and information on the AONB up to date, integrating with systems of key partners as much as possible.	In progress	AONB, SC, NE	2009-14	GB	Need to review monitoring and data priorities in light of reducing resources and capacity at the Council and Natural England.
1.4	Establish a simple strategy for making data available and disseminating information to partners and wider audiences.	Aspiration	AONB	2009	PH	Not progressed yet but still worthwhile
1.5	Establish a programme of fixed point photography at key locations as a means of monitoring landscape change.	Aspiration	AONB	2009-12	GB	Not started

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OBJECTIVE 2 To provide information and guidance to land managers on practices which support the special qualities of the AONB.						
2.1	Produce guidance and advice leaflets relating to the AONB for target groups, e.g. farmers, smallholders, woodland owners.	Aspiration	AONB, FWAG, NE, SCC, RH	2009-11	CL	AONB Woodlands Project leaflet produced. No specific leaflets for farmers but many events promoted through networks including Shropshire Rural Hub.
2.2	Complete and disseminate design guidance for agricultural buildings.	In progress	AONB, LAs, RH, NFU, CLA	2009	GB	Text and illustrations being put together for electronic publication by Nov 2010.
2.3	Continue and develop provision and integration of farm conservation advice, through one to one visits and Farmers' Den approach, and focusing on upland livestock farmers.	In progress	AONB, FWAG, NE, LAs, BL	2009-14	CL	Phase 2 of farmer engagement project completed spring 2010. LEADER funding approved for roll-out in larger scale project, match funding application pending.
2.4	Develop a section on the AONB website on sources of advice.	Aspiration	AONB	2009-10	SH	Some in Energy & climate change pages, plus publications. Website restructuring is pending.
OBJECTIVE 3 To set and influence policy and strategy which supports AONB purposes and Management Plan priorities.						
3.1	Ensure strong and consistent policies relating to AONB are included in Local Development Framework documents of both authorities.	In progress	LAs, AONB	2009-14	GB	Policy for the AONB formed a key aspect of AONB Partnership response to Site Allocations & Management of Development DPD consultation June 2010.
3.2	Renew AONB planning protocol outlining basis and procedures for AONB Partnership involvement in planning policy, guidance and casework.	Aspiration	AONB, LAs	2009-10	GB	Updated Protocol provided to Shropshire Council, and discussions ongoing about consultation procedures.
3.3	Explore the development of an Area Action Plan for the AONB within the Shropshire Local Development Framework based on aspects of the AONB Management Plan.	Aspiration	LAs, AONB	2009-14	GB	Appears unlikely to progress.
3.4	Work co-operatively on production of Supplementary Planning Documents relating to the AONB, including landscape, biodiversity, trees & woodland.	Aspiration	LAs, AONB	2010-14	GB	Early work natural environment aspects started summer 2010.
3.5	Establish better links, consultation procedures and awareness of the AONB regarding transport and highways matters.	In progress	SC, AONB	2009-14	GB	Improved links with public transport through Shuttles, no real change re highways.
3.6	Consider all purposes of AONB designation and Management Plan priorities in preparing strategies and policies, and consult the AONB Partnership as appropriate.	Ongoing role	LAs and other especially public bodies	2009-14	PH	Consultation with AONB Partnership is good, and recognition of the AONB in strategic documents is generally improved. Some concerns that the AONB is not being adequately differentiated in emerging planning policy approaches for Shropshire.
3.7	Input to strategic consultations especially at local and county level, and contribute to national consultations in conjunction with NAAONB.	Ongoing role	AONB	2009-14	PH	Input during 2009/10 to the Commission for Rural Communities Uplands Enquiry, and to consultations on drafts of the Severn River Basin Management Plan, Shropshire Cultural Strategy, Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Natural England draft Protected Landscapes Position.

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3.8	Foster close links between the AONB and Local Strategic Partnerships, reflecting this in Sustainable Community Strategies and where possible Local Area Agreements.	In progress	AONB, LSPs	2009-14	PH	Removal of Area Partnerships will reduce contact at a local level.
3.9	Develop a guidance document on management of roads in the AONB including design standards for infrastructure and signage, management of road verges and hedges to optimise conservation value, etc.	Aspiration	AONB, SCC, HA	2011-14	GB	Deferred due to other priorities.
3.10	Support the development of Village and Parish Design Statements.	In progress	AONB, LAs, PCs	2009-14	GB	None in progress at present.
OBJECTIVE 4 To seek the best protection for the AONB and support for Management Plan priorities from planning decisions.						
4.1	Take planning decisions and enforcement action in support of AONB purposes and Management Plan priorities.	Ongoing role	LAs	2009-14	GB	AONB does feature in decisions, but there is little evidence of direct application of the Management Plan, and some differences of approach between the Plan and decisions made.
4.2	Organise training relating to the AONB for Planning Officers and Planning Committee members.	Aspiration	AONB, LAs	2009-10	GB	Seminar for planning officers held 21 Jul 2010, attended by 21.
4.3	Report annually on the number and type of planning applications in the AONB, and on the numbers granted, refused on grounds of the AONB or modified on grounds of the AONB, ideally as part of Annual Monitoring Reports.	Aspiration	LAs, AONB	2009-14	GB	Not clear if this is possible.
4.4	Seek to establish an AONB Design Award to recognise high quality development.	Aspiration	AONB, LAs	2010-12	GB	Not started
OBJECTIVE 5 To optimise the uptake, targeting and effectiveness of agri-environment and woodland grant schemes.						
see also action 0.3 above						
5.1	Use local information as well as nationally available datasets to ensure high standard of Farm Environment Plans and appropriate targeting of HLS. (see also Action 7.3)	In progress	NE, AONB, SC, FWAG, SWT, WGs	2009-14	GB	Some improvements to availability of local datasets (see 1.2), which may be helping with selection of most beneficial scheme options. Targeting of uptake of HLS remains difficult due to lack of pro-active capacity and need for applicant to be keen, but see 5.2
5.2	Support high levels of uptake of agri-environment schemes, where possible by extra events and pro-active advisory work.	In progress	FWAG, AONB, NT, SWT, RH, NE.	2009-14	CL	Farmers' Dens through Land , Life & Livelihoods/ FWAG SDF project 2009/10. Also Famer Engagement work provided many referrals to Natural England.
5.3	Monitor implementation of the Long Mynd Common ESA agreement, and on its expiry seek to secure a Higher Level Stewardship agreement.	Complete	NT, NE	2009-10	GB	New HLS agreement in place Nov 2009.
5.4	Seek to undertake a study of the implications of the end of the Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme, and the implications of transition to Environmental Stewardship.	Aspiration	WNCS, AONB, NE	2009-10	PH	Potential opportunity through Walford & North Shropshire College was not progressed. Remains a worthwhile aspiration but unlikely to go ahead.

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5.5	Provide input to consultations on Higher Level Stewardship agreements, Forest Design Plans and Woodland Grant Scheme applications.	In progress	AONB, NE, FC	2009-14	GB	Some input provided to consultations, but scope to improve this.
OBJECTIVE 6 To conserve and enhance existing high quality habitats, preventing loss and improving condition,						
and conserve and enhance populations of priority species.						
6.1	Achieve national target of 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in favourable condition. Consider possibility of proactive project focussing on smaller SSSIs.	In progress/ Aspiration	NE, AONB	2014	PH	Condition is improving but remains behind national average and short of 95% target.
6.2	Continue the Shropshire Hills Rivers Project working with land managers to improve habitat and water quality and especially seeking to improve the condition of the River Clun SAC (Freshwater Pearl Mussel site) and River Teme SSSI.	In progress	AONB, NE, EA, SWT	2009-12	MK	in 2009/10, 60 farm visits made to give river management advice. Practical works have been undertaken at nine sites and preparation work at a further ten sites. In all cases there are close links with agri-environment schemes and the Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative. Six events were organised or supported, attended by a total of over 125 people.
6.3	Co-ordinate biodiversity action and reporting through the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership.	Ongoing role	SC, SWT, NE , AONB	2009-14	PH	Biodiversity Partnership remains active with good AONB involvement. Refocus going on around landscape-scale Priority Areas for Action with good connection to AONB.
6.4	Establish programme of monitoring of condition of Wildlife Sites, to report on local authority indicator NI 197.	Aspiration	SC, SWT, NE	2009-14	PH	NI 197 indicator is being scrapped, but data collection and monitoring may continue.
6.5	Manage conservation sites to meet targets of BAP habitat and species action plans.	Ongoing role	NT, NE, SC, SWT	Ongoing	PH	Long Mynd, Wenlock Edge and Stiperstones are key sites, plus a range of others. AONB input into SWT Management Plans for Catherton Common and various woodland sites.
6.6	Establish a dedicated service or network to provide advice to owners of Wildlife Sites in the AONB.	Aspiration	AONB, SWT, SC, NE	2010-12	CF	Provision of Wildlife Site management advice is likely to be included in the proposed Stiperstones - Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme proposal.
6.7	Continue targeted survey and monitoring of priority habitats and species.	In progress	SWT, SC, NE, RGS, UOWG	Ongoing	PH	Recent survey work carried out on wet flushes of Stretton Hills. See also 6.8.
6.8	Liaise with farmers and farm advisers to promote targeted conservation measures to reverse declines of threatened bird species including Lapwing, Curlew and Snipe, and continue detailed monitoring.	In progress	UOWG, FWAG, AONB, SWT	Ongoing	CL	SDF project on threatened birds continues to provide good information and close links with landowners and advisers. Lapwing showing some signs of recovery through targeted action, snipe and curlew still in decline.
6.9	Seek to reduce or remove grazing in upland semi-natural woodlands.	In progress	FC, NE	Ongoing	BB	EWGS and HLS are probably the main means of delivering this.
6.10	Target reversion to broadleaved cover on Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWs) and Plantations on Wood Pasture (PWP).	In progress	AONB, FC, LOs	Ongoing	BB	Key focus of AONB Woodlands Project.

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6.11	Develop a Shropshire Hills AONB Woodlands project, focussing on ancient semi-natural woodland and PAWS and supporting management through advice, small grants and strengthening markets for woodland products.	Aspiration	AONB, FC, WT, GWC, NE	2009-14	CF	Project Officer started Sept 2010. To April 2010 20 woodland advice visits were made and four Management Plans completed, covering a total of 63 ha of woodland. In addition, 20 businesses were visited and advice reports prepared through the Woodland Enterprise Grant scheme.
N.B. Other actions relating to the AONB are contained in the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan, available at http://www.naturalshropshire.org.uk/						
OBJECTIVE 7 To restore and create improved habitat networks at a lanscape scale by enhancing habitats (including heathland, grassland and woodland) especially buffering and linking existing high quality areas.						
7.1	Continue to restore heather cover on the Stiperstones ridge (including beyond the NNR) through the 'Back to Purple' project.	In progress	NE, SWT , LOs	2009-14	PH	Management for heather recovery on recently felled land at Nipstone Rock.
7.2	Seek to acquire strategically located sites of conservation importance or potential, especially neighbouring existing conservation sites.	Ongoing role	NT, SWT	Ongoing	PH	Public appeal going on for SWT to purchase freehold of Pontesford Hill. Concern re disposal of publicly owned sites due to funding pressures.
7.3	Use all available information to help target Higher Level Stewardship uptake to develop habitat networks, especially in Long Mynd - Stiperstones area.	In progress	SC, AONB, FWAG, NE, SWT, UOWG, NT	2009-14	CL	Biodiversity targeting information made available. Some contact made with landowners through FWAG SDF event 8 Oct 09, but limited attendance.
7.4	Continue to foster community and landowner support for landscape scale conservation, including through the AONB Long Mynd - Stiperstones Group, and exchange ideas with other areas such as the Clun Forest.	In progress	AONB, NT, SWT, NE, UOWG, FWAG, SCC	2009-14	CL	Public meeting planned for Nov 2010.
7.5	Seek to develop woodland habitat networks, including by restoring to broadleaved cover and planting new adjacent sites, especially along Wenlock Edge.	In progress	NT, AONB, SWT, FC, NE	2009-14	BB	Where possible through Woodlands Project and grants.
7.6	Seek to develop former Wenlock Edge Quarries for conservation and appropriate recreation.	In progress	NT, AONB, SWT, NE, SC, PCs	2009-14	CL	Detailed consultation and feasibility work carried out, with local Steering Group. Implementation dependent on National Trust purchase of sites and allocation of capital funding.
OBJECTIVE 8 To improve the condition of geological sites and raise awareness of geology and its influences on landscape and human activity.						
8.1	Develop a leaflet and model management plan for Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), and raise awareness of RIGS among landowners, parish councils, planners and developers.	Aspiration	SC, AONB, SGS, SWT	2009-10	PH	Unlikely to progress due to resource constraints
8.2	Secure resources to raise level of geoconservation action, ideally through a Geodiversity Officer for Shropshire.	Aspiration	SC, AONB, SGS, SWT	2009-11	PH	Unlikely to progress due to resource constraints

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8.3	Develop interpretation at key geological sites.	In progress	SGS, SWT, NT, SC, AONB	2009-14	PH	GeoTrails leaflets published for Titterstone Clee, Wenlock Edge and the Wrekin.
N.B. Other actions relating to the AONB are contained in the Shropshire Geodiversity Action Plan, available at http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning.nsf/open/EEE885581E0DAEF280257516003D64B6						
OBJECTIVE 9 To conserve and manage heritage features and attributes, preventing damage and acting to maintain value where necessary.						
9.1	Support and develop proposals for conservation or restoration works at key historic sites (e.g. 31 SAMs at High Risk, 3 Listed Buildings at Risk).	In progress	EH, LAs, NE, AONB	2009-14	GB	Works under way at Hopton Castle. Blakemoorgate cottages on Stiperstones to be stabilised through Once Upon a Hill project. Improvements and access sought at Brockhurst Castle site, Church Stretton.
9.2	Develop a strategic approach to the conservation and stabilisation of vernacular farm buildings, identifying which buildings are most at risk and seeking funding for conservation works.	Complete	LAs, EH, AONB	2009-11	GB	Shropshire Historic Farmstead study complete.
9.3	Put in place structures and resources for new local authority heritage responsibilities.	In progress	SC, EH	2009	GB	Heritage Protection Reform proposals have not yet been enacted through legislation. Local authority restructuring and funding cuts may have an effect.
9.4	Develop a new project focused on historic features which have so far received little attention, e.g. water meadows and willow pollards.	Aspiration	AONB, EH, LAs, CGs	2009-11	GB	Mining heritage is a key focus of proposed Stiperstones - Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme. Proposed flow management/ wetlands project in Church Stretton valley.
OBJECTIVE 10 To improve water quality, especially through reducing diffuse pollution, to reach requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.						
10.1	Improve water quality through improvements in sewage treatment infrastructure and drainage systems, focusing especially on problems in the River Kemp.	In progress	STW, EA	2009-14	MK	Small scale domestic installations are thought to be a significant issue, with a large number of discharge consents, and relatively little information or monitoring.
10.2	Continue to implement the River Teme Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative, aiming to reduce diffuse pollution including through improved land management.	In progress	NE, EA	2009-10	MK	Further round of grants are available.
OBJECTIVE 11 To improve where possible eyesores in the landscape and existing inappropriate development.						
11.1	Implement a programme of undergrounding of electricity cables, prioritised according to landscape impact.	In progress	CN, AONB	2009-12	GB	4 schemes have progressed to wayleave discussions with landowners. No work yet commenced on the ground.
OBJECTIVE 12 To retain tranquillity, gather more information and raise the profile of this quality.						
12.1	Undertake surveys of perception of tranquillity.	Aspiration	AONB	2009-14	GB	Not started
OBJECTIVE 13 To improve integration of environmental practices, wildlife and farm conservation with business development (such as product differentiation, direct local selling and diversification), especially in the Less Favoured Areas.						

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13.1	Implement economic and social aspects of the Rural Development Programme for England 2007-13, maintaining integration between axes.	In progress	AWM, NE	2009-13	CF	Rural Enterprise Grants being delivered by Herefordshire Council, include Farm Health Planning etc. Delivery of RDPE is ongoing, with Rural Hub providing a signposting role. AONB involvement in West Midlands RDPE Partners group representing LEADER LAGs.
13.2	Develop farm advice project focusing on livestock farmers in LFA areas (See also 2.3).	In progress	AONB, BL, DG, AWM	2009	CF	LEADER funding secured for roll out of farmer engagement pilot project. Reaching Communities full application invited. Proposed project start is Jan 2011.
13.3	Undertake a programme of one to one visits and talks to groups to create better links between the AONB and the farming community.	In progress	AONB	2009-11	CL	One to one discussions took place with 22 farmers through the Farmer Engagement project Phase 2. Some of these were commoners on Catherton Common and helped the Shropshire Wildlife Trust progress conservation aims for the common.
13.4	Support the establishment of a demonstration farm (or farms) in the AONB, e.g. through the LEAF (Linking Environment & Farming) scheme.	Aspiration	LEAF, NE, FWAG, NFU, AONB, RH	2009-14	CL	There is one LEAF farm just outside the AONB in the Corve Dale.
OBJECTIVE 14 To maintain food production by environmentally sustainable means and maintain long term capacity to continue to produce food, by promoting farm support networks, encouraging succession and retaining and developing skills.						
14.1	Develop farmer networks and training opportunities through the Shropshire Rural Hub, including improved involvement in the south of the county.	In progress	RH, AWM, LLL, AONB	2009-14	CL	Close links continued with Rural Hub and joint advice clinics delivered with Business Link and Natural ENgland at AONB Partnership office.
14.2	Seek to encourage succession in farming and support continuity of skills and knowledge.	In progress	WNSC, RH	2009-14	CL	Fresh Start scheme in operation, linking young trainees with those retiring from farming.
14.3	Continue the Clun Forest 'Land, Life & Livelihoods' project and seek to apply this experience elsewhere in the AONB.	In progress	LLL, AONB	2009-14	CL	Land, Life & Livelihoods had a further SDF grant in 2009-10 and delivered events linking farming with the wider community. The group's structure has been reviewed and a constitution agreed. Current activity includes a proposed Upper Clun Community Catchment project.
OBJECTIVE 15 To increase the local supply of food, especially meat from grazing animals, through improving supply chains and expanding from niche markets, e.g. into tourism and public sector procurement.						
15.1	Seek to develop Shropshire Hills branded meat marketing initiative in conjunction with Daysdrove abattoir at Bishop's Castle.	Aspiration	SASTAK, AWM, AONB, LAs, LLL, NT	2009-11	CL	Daysdrove has been up and running since Nov 2009. AONB links established through joint events for farmers, but no prospect of branding initiative at present.
15.2	Seek to develop a distribution hub for local food products, to improve market penetration.	Aspiration	RH, L21, LAs, AONB	2009-10	CF	This proposal appears now to be less likely to happen. Local food continues to developed in other ways, including through Farmers' Markets (see 17.2)

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15.3	Consider red meat marketing initiative for Shropshire Hills lamb and beef, with Protected Geographic Indicator or other status.	Aspiration	SASTAK, AWM, AONB, LAs, LLL, NT	2009-14	CF	Not started
OBJECTIVE 16 To increase the local supply of wood and wood products, especially woodfuel.						
16.1	Where possible focus activities of the Heartwoods initiative in the Shropshire Hills to promote management of broadleaved woods and uptake and supply chain development of woodfuel.	In progress	GWC, FC, AWM, AONB	2009-10	BB	AONB Woodlands Officer is one of Heartwoods 'Woodfuel Champions' and has undertaken contract advice work. Heartwoods currently making a SITA funding application for woodland work including in the AONB.
16.2	Develop a sub-regional initiative on coppice woods to improve woodland management and improve the supply of material to local greenwood craftsmen.	Complete	GWC, AONB, SWT, LOs	2009-10	BB	Green Wood Centre project supported by SDF funding in 2005-6, 2006-7 and 2007-8.
OBJECTIVE 17 To stimulate local demand by raising awareness among consumers of food and other local products, and their connections with the landscape.						
17.1	Continue to undertake publicity and promotion on local food by a variety of means including press, leaflets, exhibitions and events such as food fairs, farm walks, schools activities.	In progress	LAs, RH, PGs, AONB	2009-14	CF	Outputs for new AONB 'Discover Local' project include events, monthly press releases, development of the Buy Local website and Twitter and Facebook accounts.
17.2	Continue to support the development of the Shropshire Hills Farmers Markets, and collaboration with promotion.	In progress	FMs, AONB	2009-14	CF	RDPE funded Shropshire Farmers Market project secured. Tish Dockerty is leading the development of the markets. New Shropshire Hills Farmers Market leaflets printed.
17.3	Continue to develop opportunities for public sector procurement of local food.	In progress	LAs	2009-14	CF	Shropshire Council has made significant progress in local procurement through splitting contracts geographically and holding supplier events.
17.4	Develop the 'Made in Shropshire' project promoting local products.	In progress	RH	2009-14	CF	Continues through monthly fair in Shrewsbury and website http://www.madeinshropshire.co.uk/
OBJECTIVE 18 To develop and support sustainable tourism strongly linked to the landscape of the Shropshire Hills, including policy, facilities and services and approaches to marketing.						
18.1	Target farm-based accommodation for involvement in the Sustainable Business Scheme, and develop the links between farm tourism, local foods and conservation of the landscape.	In progress	AONB	2009-12	CF	Discover Local is developing links between tourism, local foods and conservation. Farm based businesses are targeted through the Buy Local initiative and South Shropshire Farm Holiday Group.
18.2	Implement actions from the Church Stretton Sustainable Tourism Strategy	In progress	CSATG, TC, LA, AONB	2009-13	CF	Historic placques erected, illustrated timeline due October 2010, travel hub development continuing, website development funding secured, Christmas Fair 20th Nov 2010.

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18.3	Complete a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Shropshire Hills, and consider the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.	In progress	AONB, LAs, SHT, ST, DDP	2009-12	CF	Funding secured through Natural Assets to develop a Sustainable Tourism Strategy. This may become the strategy and action plan for the new Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Development Partnership.
18.4	Consider establishing a visitor payback scheme.	Aspiration	AONB	2010-12	CF	Not started
18.5	Continue training related to sustainable tourism and the AONB for front-line staff and volunteers e.g. at Visitor Information Centres and walks leaders.	In progress	LAs, AONB, SHT	2009-14	CF	Two events held for Shuttles familiarisation, spring 2010. SC 'Walking Doctor' project developed to provide training for VIC staff on local walking opportunities. Walking with Offa will fund a programme of training for walks leaders, VIC staff and businesses.
18.6	Implement 'Walking With Offa' project as part of wider 'Offa's Country' sustainable tourism project.	In progress	AONB, AWM, UCL, SC, HC, PCC, NE, WAG	2009-	CF	Natural Assets funding secured for 'Walking with Offa' project. £1.4 million application due to Welsh Assembly Government for wider Walking with Offa Programme plus LEADER applications for the English side of the border..
OBJECTIVE 19 To reduce energy use by households, services, farms and businesses, including through energy conservation and efficiency.						
19.1	Develop initiatives involving businesses and the community to reduce the carbon footprint of human activity in the AONB.	In progress	MEA, CGs, LAs, BL, AONB, NT	2009-14	PH	Farm Carbon is a LEADER funded project conducting farm energy surveys. Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme includes activity to reduce carbon.
OBJECTIVE 20 To increase local production of renewable energy in ways compatible with the AONB.						
20.1	Continue to develop guidance on how renewable energy can be developed in the area with minimum impact on the AONB's special qualities.	In progress	LAs, AONB, MEA	2009-10	PH	Input to certain planning cases and advice to householders, farmers and businesses through a range of SDF and LEADER projects.
OBJECTIVE 21 To integrate affordable housing of high design and environmental standards in appropriate locations.						
21.1	Work pro-actively together and ensure early consultation to ensure that Housing Association schemes are developed in keeping with the AONB's aims.	Aspiration	HAs, AONB, LAs	2009-12	GB	No recent schemes in the AONB.
OBJECTIVE 22 To promote relevant training to maintain and develop skills to support AONB priorities, including land management and traditional crafts, sustainable business and environmental knowledge.						
22.1	Establish current activity, gaps and development needs in training and skills related to conserving the AONB's special qualities.	Aspiration	AONB, LSC, LAs, WNCS, HAUC, LSPs	2009-12	PB	No study specific to the AONB, though more information is available about training and skills through other initiatives including Shropshire Council Historic Environment Team and Shropshire Rural Hub.

Ref.	Action (High priority actions shown with shaded background)	Status	Lead and key partners	Target timescale	Officer	Update on progress
22.2	Promote and develop training opportunities which support conservation land management, including Farming Focus programme.	In progress	WNSC, HAUC, RH, NE, LSC, FWAG	Ongoing	CL	Farming Focus has concluded. Wide range of opportunities through educational establishments and other activities publicised by Rural Hub.
22.3	Develop at Acton Scott Historic Working Farm new training facilities and programmes for traditional skills, and seek to maximise relevance to landscape management.	Complete/ongoing	SC, AONB	2009-14	CL	New building opened summer 2009. SDF project on sustainable farming courses.
OBJECTIVE 23 To improve land management for flood alleviation.						
23.1	Develop understanding and promote principles of land management for flood alleviation.	In progress	EA, LAs, AONB, NE	2009-14	PH	Some AONB involvement in Stretton Area Flood Forum. Support for proposed Upper Clun Community Catchment project. Flood alleviation will form part of River Clun Catchment Management Plan currently in preparation.
<i>N.B. Other actions listed will also contribute to this objective.</i>						
OBJECTIVE 24 To reduce greenhouse gas emissions from land management and increase carbon sequestration including through soils and trees.						
24.1	Develop understanding and promote principles of land management for carbon sequestration.	In progress	LAs, NE, AONB	2009-14	PH	Farm Carbon LEADER project has helped provide understanding of situation on farms in the AONB and what improvements might be made.
<i>N.B. Other actions listed will also contribute to this objective.</i>						
OBJECTIVE 25 To reduce car dependency and optimise provision and use of public transport.						
25.1	Continue to operate and promote the Shropshire Hills Shuttles service, and make best use of public transport for visitors, e.g. through promotion for walks, linking events.	In progress	AONB, LAs, NT, NE	2009-14	CF	2010 passenger 21% down on 2009, but income approx 24% up on 2009 due to raised prices. Reliance on external funding slightly reduced, but service looks likely to be reduced for 2011 to reduce losses.
25.2	Develop and support business and community initiatives to reduce car dependency, e.g. green travel plans, car sharing and pool schemes.	Ongoing role	LAs, AONB	2009-14	SH	Support available for a range of initiatives. Uptake in the AONB not known.
OBJECTIVE 26 To promote and support environmentally sound leisure and recreation activities.						
26.1	Continue to develop facilities and promotion of the Shropshire Hills for walking, on and off-road cycling and for horse riding. Develop Walking Festivals and 'Walkers Are Welcome' initiative.	Ongoing role	SC, AONB, NT, NE, FC, RA, TGs	2009-14	SH	Walking with Offa will promote circular routes, Days Out and train walks. A new proposal for 'Walking for Wellbeing' will bring together Walkers Are Welcome and Walking for Health to deliver more benefits from walking.
26.2	Seek to raise standards on public rights of way, and maximise potential of other access including open access land, agri-environment agreements, forestry land and countryside sites.	Ongoing role	SC, LOs, NE, FC, SWT	2009-14	PH	New hierarchical approach developed to prioritising the rights of way network for maintenance - high priority routes to include strategic routes and routes in areas that are known tourist 'hotspots' or covered by 'Walkers are Welcome' status.

Ref.	Action (High priority actions shown with shaded background)	Status	Lead and key partners	Target timescale	Officer	Update on progress
26.3	Promote long distance recreational routes eg. Offa's Dyke National Trail, as a sustainable tourism resource, and encourage local businesses to link to them.	Ongoing role	SC, NE, LAs	2009-14	SH	Walking with Offa will develop Offa's Dyke Path, circular walks and other long distance paths. A guided walks programme will result.
26.4	Upgrade the standard of the Shropshire Way, and develop linked short walks, including linear walks accessible by public transport.	Ongoing	SC	2009-10	SH	Major upgrade of Shropshire Hills section complete. Funding secured to upgrade the Shropshire Way to Much Wenlock and to develop short circular walks. In addition, further funding secured to upgrade the Shropshire Way from Church Stretton towards Shrewsbury and to develop a new loop via Snailbeach and Pontesbury.
26.5	Develop a strategic approach to managing access at popular conservation sites, e.g. Long Mynd, Stiperstones.	Aspiration	AONB, NT, NE, SC, RA, LDBA	2009-10	PH	Not progressed as expected. Stiperstones NNR Management Plan review completed and new Walkers are Welcome routes established from Church Stretton.
26.6	Develop links with outdoor activity providers, e.g. providing talks and information on special qualities of the AONB and good environmental practice.	Aspiration	AONB	2009-14	SH	Included in the Walking with Offa project.
<p>N.B. Other actions relating to the AONB are contained in the Shropshire Countryside Access Strategy, available at http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/countryside.nsf/open/74AB1B9A3C0FF4A28025756E003BB28E</p>						
OBJECTIVE 27 To raise public awareness of the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills and of the AONB and its management.						
27.1	Improve information on the AONB and its special qualities for other organisations to use in promotion and interpretation.	In progress	AONB	2009-10	SH	AONB Sense of Place Toolkits distributed to all Sustainable Business Scheme members, with appropriate text and images.
27.2	Continue to produce and refine AONB publicity material including publications, website, press releases, talks, etc.	Ongoing role	AONB	2009-14	SH	26 press releases in 2009-10. New Communications Strategy approved Feb 2010.
27.3	Seek to raise the profile of the AONB and the Shropshire Hills within the county and especially in Shrewsbury.	In progress	AONB, LAs	2009-14	SH	Improved distribution of publicity materials. Participation in Food Awareness event in Shrewsbury market square, Jul 2010. Shropshire Hills and Severn Valley Discovery Map produced Sept 2010 with wide distribution.
27.4	Make appropriate reference and links to the AONB and its special qualities in the interpretation facilities in the area, e.g. Bog Centre, FC and NT land, SWT reserves.	Ongoing role	SC, FC, NT, SWT, AONB	2009-14	SH	Review of interpretation at Cardingmill Valley in progress. Mention of the AONB in interpretation is easily overlooked and needs to remain a priority.
27.5	Co-ordinate provision and promotion of Shropshire Hills events from a number of providers. Seek to develop guided walks programmes and promote appropriately to demand.	In progress	AONB, SC, NT, SHT	2009-12	SH	2010 joint Shropshire Hills Events & Visitor Guide very successful. Work under way for 2011 Guide. AONB guided walks in 2010 had limited success.
27.6	Develop a co-ordinated interpretation plan for the Stiperstones area, linking with Shrewsbury, Powys and the Long Mynd.	Aspiration	SWT, SC, AONB, NE	2009-11	CF	Being developed as part of the proposed Stiperstones - Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Ref.	Action (High priority actions shown with shaded background)	Status	Lead and key partners	Target timescale	Officer	Update on progress
27.7	Continue to promote and develop the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre as a focus for formal and informal learning, enjoyment and cultural activity related to the Shropshire Hills area. Continue rebranding to lower the profile of the 'Secret Hills' name. Develop a 'compact' or agreement outlining links between the Centre and the AONB.	Ongoing role	SC, AONB	2009-14	PH	Walking With Offa funding available to develop new media interpretation at or around the Discovery Centre.
OBJECTIVE 28 To strengthen communities and build their capacity and cohesion by broadening participation in community activity.						
28.1	Increase coverage of Parish Plans, and include landscape and sustainability issues.	In progress	PPSGs, CCS, PCs, AONB	2009-14	CL	Activity on Parish Plans has been slow recently. New officer now in post at Community Council.
28.2	Seek to repeat Down to Earth approaches through LEADER.	Aspiration	AONB, CCS, LAs	2009-14	PB	Participatory approaches through Once Upon a Hill, Sacred Spaces, Bishop's Castle Heritage project and Into the Hills. Also in Stiperstones - Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme and Wenlock Quarries project.
28.3	Support community groups and projects and co-ordinate funding and services available.	Ongoing role	CCS, CVS, AONB, LAs	2009-14	CL	South Shropshire Voluntary Action was wound up in 2009 with loss of capacity. Council Community Regeneration Officers continue to provide support and capacity through AONB Team remains important.
OBJECTIVE 29 To maximise health and wellbeing benefits from access to the countryside.						
29.1	Expand the capacity and uptake of Health Walking schemes in and around the AONB.	In progress	SC, PCT	2009-14	CF	Included in the Walking for Wellbeing application.
29.2	Use Quality of Life indicators for evaluating more formal events to provide evidence on wellbeing benefits.	In progress	LAs, AONB, CGs	2009-14	CF	This system does provide good information but appears to be less used now.
OBJECTIVE 30 To broaden participation in the countryside from a wider cross-section of society, targeting under-represented groups such as the young, elderly and less able.						
30.1	Develop opportunities to engage young people through the LEADER programme.	Aspiration	AONB, YF, LAs,	2009-14	PB	LEADER grant for 'Youthful Landscapes' project approved, but Access to Nature bid unsuccessful. Also School Farmers Markets and opportunities through other projects.
30.2	Conduct an Equalities Impact Assessment for the operation of the AONB Partnership and take priority actions identified.	Complete	AONB, SC	2009-10	PH	Assessment completed. No significant actions resulting.
30.3	Seek to develop Care Farming initiatives in the AONB.	In progress	CFWM, SC, AONB	2010-14	CL	Projects being developed at Brynmawr, Lower Bush and Hopesay Glebe.
OBJECTIVE 31 To encourage understanding and knowledge of Shropshire Hills, especially through schools and further and higher education.						
31.1	Continue to provide and improve field activities for schools and support for in-school activities. Seek to develop relevant local links to develop sense of place and reduce travel.	Ongoing role	NT, SWT, LAs	2009-14	CL	Direct AONB Partnership involvement with schools has increased due to links with SDF projects. National Trust and Wildlife Trust activity remains significant.

Ref.	Action (High priority actions shown with shaded background)	Status	Lead and key partners	Target timescale	Officer	Update on progress
31.2	Develop links with Higher & Further Education establishments	In progress	AONB, WNSC, HAUC	2009-14	PH	Lectures given at Harper Adams Jan 2010. Walford College involved in skills proposals for Stiperstones - Corndon project.
OBJECTIVE 32 To increase active involvement with the AONB's countryside, including through volunteering and opportunities to support the AONB directly.						
32.1	Support the development of existing and new opportunities for volunteering through the LEADER programme.	Aspiration	AONB, SCC	2009-13	PB	Almost all LEADER projects offer opportunities for volunteering.
32.2	Increase the coverage and activity of Parish Paths Partnership (P3) groups operating within or partly within the AONB.	Ongoing role	SC, PCs	2009-14	CL	Currently groups based at Clun, Corvedale, Cleobury Mortimer and Bishop's Castle.
32.3	Support the development of the Tree Wardens network and community wildlife groups.	In progress	AONB, SC, SWT	2009-14	CL	Community Wildlife Groups have increased and a LEADER project is proposed. Tree Wardens in place for many parishes, but relatively little activity in development of network.
32.4	Develop community archaeology projects including Acton Scott, Rectory Wood and Lost Communities of the Stiperstones.	In progress	SC, NE, CGs, AONB	2009-12	GB	Once Upon a Hill project for Stiperstones under way with LEADER funding.
OBJECTIVE 33 To develop sense of place and community pride around the Shropshire Hills, and strengthen the 'Shropshire Hills' identity, especially in visitor and tourism promotion material.						
33.1	Improve the countryside content and profile of the Shropshire Hills in tourism promotion, and outline sustainable ways of enjoying the AONB.	In progress	SHT, LAs, AONB	2009-14	SH	Close collaboration over Ludlow & Shropshire Hills guide and website. Shropshire Hills & Severn Valley Discovery Map published.
33.2	Develop sense of place and awareness of the AONB through enhanced signage on key routes into the AONB and where appropriate on town and village signs.	In progress	AONB	2009-11	SH	Signs featuring AONB recently in place at Church Stretton and Pontesbury.
33.4	Develop the 'Friends of the Shropshire Hills' group.	In progress	AONB	2009-14	CL	Second annual summer event held at Catherton Common, June 2010. Membership at 80 July 2010 following lack of some renewals at end of first year.
	<i>See also community and awareness raising actions.</i>					
OBJECTIVE 34 To build the AONB Partnership as an inclusive structure with sound governance and strong partnership relations and communication.						
34.1	Maintain good links between partners and the AONB Team, ideally through at least one bilateral meeting per year.	Ongoing	AONB	2009-14	PH	At least 34 bilateral meetings held with team members 2009-10.
34.2	Review AONB Partnership governance to integrate LEADER requirements and adapt to unitary local authority.	In progress	AONB, LAs	2009	PH	New Terms of Reference drafted and agreed by Partnership and Council legal departments. Awaiting formal Council approval.
34.3	Agree new Memorandum of Understanding between Natural England and local authority funders.	Preliminary discussions	NE, AONB, LAs	2009	PH	Partnership Agreement for period up to March 2011 signed in April 2010.

Ref.	Action (High priority actions shown with shaded background)	Status	Lead and key partners	Target timescale	Officer	Update on progress
34.4	Establish clear and balanced relationship between AONB Partnership and new unitary Shropshire Council as host authority.	Complete/ongoing	AONB, LAs	2008-9	PH	Ongoing building of relationships, and need for better understanding of AONB Partnership role in relation to planning. Good links with Natural and Historic Environment, Economic Development, Transport, Outdoor Recreation, Community Working
34.5	Support the National Association for AONBs, West Midlands Protected Landscapes Forum and the Europarc Federation and raise the profile of and involvement with their work among partners.	Ongoing	AONB	2009-10	PH	Active involvement with NAAONB. Provide chairing role for West Midlands Protected Landscapes Forum.
OBJECTIVE 35 To monitor and report on progress with the Management Plan and condition of the AONB.						
35.1	Undertake monitoring on implementation by public bodies of their S85 duty to have regard to the AONB.	In progress	AONB	2009-14	PH	No formal reporting. S85 duty is quoted extensively in consultation responses. Natural England advice booklet circulated to all Parish Councils in AONB 2010.
35.2	Publish an annual progress report and update of the Management Plan Actions.	In progress	AONB	2009-14	PH	First Update for 2009-14 Plan to be published October 2010.

Abbreviation	AONB Partnership member?	Full Name
AONB		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
AWM	✓	Advantage West Midlands (Regional Development Agency)
BL		Business Link
CCS		Community Council of Shropshire
CFWM		Care Farming West Midlands
CGs		Community groups
CLA	✓	Country Land & Business Association
CN		Central Networks (electricity distributor)
CSATG		Church Stretton Area Tourism Group
CVS		Community & Volunteer Service
DDP		Destination Development Partnership
EA	✓	Environment Agency
EH	✓	English Heritage
FC	✓	Forestry Commission
FMs		Farmers Markets
FWAG	✓	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
GWC		Green Wood Centre
HA		Highways Agency
HAUC	✓	Harper Adams University College
HC		Herefordshire Council
LAs	✓	Local authorities
LDBA	✓	Long Mynd and District Bridleways Association
LEAF		Linking Environment & Farming
LLL		Land,Life & Livelihoods
LOs		Land owners
LSC		Learning & Skills Council
LSPs		Local strategic partnerships
L21		Ludlow 21
NE	✓	Natural England
NFU	✓	National Farmers Union
NT	✓	National Trust
PCs	✓	Parish Councils

Abbreviation	AONB Partnership member?	Full Name
PCC		Powys County Council
PGs		Producer Groups
PPSGs		Parish Plan Steering Groups
RA	✓	Ramblers Association
RGs		Recording Groups
RH		Rural Hub
SAP		Shropshire Access Partnership
SASTAK	✓	Shropshire Machinery Ring
SC	✓	Shropshire Council
SGS	✓	Shropshire Geological Society
SHT	✓	Shropshire Hills Tourism
SWT	✓	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
ST		Shropshire Tourism
STW		Severn Trent Water
TC		Town Council
TGs		Tourism Groups
UCL		University College Lancaster
UOWG	✓	Upper Onny Wildlife Group
UCCWG		Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group
WAG		Welsh Assembly Government
WGs		Wildlife Groups
WMRO		West Midlands Regional Observatory
WNSC	✓	Walford & North Shropshire College
WT		Woodland Trust
YF		Youth Forum