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| Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership | Item |
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| 7 February 2012 | 5 |
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2012-13 AONB PARTNERSHIP WORK PROGRAMME AND SUMMARY BUDGETS

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Summary

This paper presents a summary of the AONB Partnership staff team's work programme for 2012-13 and summary budgets for the current Financial Year and 2012-13, and outline budgets for 2013-15, with accompanying notes. These are a simplified version of the more detailed budgets which are scrutinised by the Management Board.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the information provided and offer comments.

Background

1. The coming year 2012-13 will see a slightly reduced overall turnover by the Partnership, with the new Stiperstones & Corndon Landscape Partnership Development work offset by the end of the current phase of Walking with Offa and cuts to LEADER.
2. The Defra AONB Single Pot funding is reduced by a further 5.4% in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. (Outline budgets for 2013-14 and 2014-15 are shown on the basis of a further 5.4% cut in these years, although there have been indications from Defra that further cuts may be necessary). The Defra grant has now been spread over a larger number of different project elements, and for maximum flexibility, the Single Pot funded elements of the budget are no longer separated from those activities to which Defra is not contributing. Reporting to Defra is on the whole of our activity in any case.
3. It appears that in future there will be greater flexibility in the use of the Defra Single Pot, possibly with no distinction between core, projects and Sustainable Development Fund, and the different grant rates which can currently apply to these. Defra are also likely to move from quarterly to annual reporting by AONBs. There are likely to be implications from these changes to things such as eligibility for grant of redundancy costs (currently covered under certain conditions for core but not project staff), but these have yet to be worked out in detail.
4. The outline budgets for future years show increasing pressure in the budget, with income targets shown in order to avoid loss of current staff. It may be possible to meet these targets, especially through contributions from projects. However, if this is not the case, or if further cuts to the Defra funding are made, some staff restructuring to make savings is likely to become necessary.

5. The full detail of the budgets are not shown, in order to simplify the table but still give members an overview. In the current year, the temporary lack of pressure on the core staffing budget due to maternity of the Promotions Officer has enabled us to replace expected contributions from AONB unrestricted funds (previously earned income) with Defra contributions, and thereby increase the reserve held on our behalf by the Council. This reserve serves as a contingency for possible redundancy liabilities for which there may be not other source, and is also needed to some degree to match larger grants for new projects.

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| <p>List of Background Papers None</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 The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.</p> |
| <p>Appendices Appendix 1 AONB Partnership Staff Team Work Programme Overview 2012-13 Appendix 2 AONB Partnership Budgets 2011-15</p> |