



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 19 March 2013	Item 6
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SAMDEV PLAN - DRAFT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES CONSULTATION

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Summary

This paper presents extracts relevant to the AONB of Shropshire Council’s current consultation on draft policies, and invites comments on these.

Background

Shropshire Council’s Core Strategy mentions the AONB in a number of places but did not include specific policies on the AONB. These have been developed in the current SAMDev draft Development Management policies, currently out for consultation by Shropshire Council until 28 March 2013. The AONB Partnership staff team has worked with officers of the Council in drafting of these policies and it is felt the wording relating to the AONB and the coverage across several policy areas is essentially strong and good. This is to be welcomed in our response to the consultation. There may be some detailed comments to make, and any observations of Partnership members in this respect will be valued.

Recommendation

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

List of Background Papers Shropshire Council SAMDev consultation papers at http://shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/open/9F75B1E4E30A1E3B80257922004CC8EE
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 topics raised follow on from earlier discussions with Partnership members.
Appendices: 1 AONB-related extracts from Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan, Draft Development Management Policies 31 Jan 2013

Appendix 1

AONB-related extracts from Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan, Draft Development Management Policies 31 Jan 2013

Policy context (extract)

The statutory Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan contains a number of policies adopted by Shropshire Council and has therefore been a key document influencing the preparation of the SAMDev policies. Whilst stressing the importance of the countryside as a whole, the SAMDev policies emphasise the importance of the AONB and the need to conserve and enhance its character and distinctiveness and have regard where appropriate to the requirements of the AONB Management Plan.

Draft Policy MD2 Sustainable Design, Explanation (extract)

For development affecting the Shropshire Hills AONB, particular regard should be paid to the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan and supplementary guidance.

Draft Policy MD7 – Managing Development in the Countryside (extract)

Further to Core Strategy Policy CS5,

1. Development in the countryside should:

- i. Protect and respect heritage and natural assets and be in accordance with the requirements of: Policy MD2 (Sustainable Design); Policy MD12 (Natural & Historic Environment); Adopted Natural and Historic Environment SPDs and, where appropriate, the AONB Management Plan;

MD8 –Infrastructure Provision (extract)

New Strategic Infrastructure

3. Applications for new strategic energy, transport, water management and telecommunications infrastructure will be supported in order to help deliver national priorities and locally identified requirements, where its contribution to agreed objectives outweighs the potential for adverse impacts. Particular consideration will be given to the potential for adverse impacts on:

- i. Residential and other sensitive neighbouring land uses;
- ii. Visual amenity;
- iii. Landscape character and sensitivity, including impacts on sensitive skylines;
- iv. Recognised natural and historic assets and their setting, including the Shropshire Hills AONB (Policy MD12);
- v. The visitor and tourism economy including long distance footpaths, cycle tracks and bridleways (Policy MD14);
- vi. Noise, air quality, dust, odour and vibration;
- vii. Water quality and resources;
- viii. Impacts from traffic and transport during the construction and operation of the infrastructure development;
- ix. Cumulative impacts.

Explanation (extract)

6. For wind energy proposals, the policy identifies a number of specific considerations which give rise to local concern and upon which specific reassurance will be sought. Applicants for such proposals should provide sufficient information to allow a qualitative assessment of the potential impacts against relevant national, local or good practice standards including:

- i. British Horse Society standards (2010) for the buffer distance between wind turbines and bridleways;
- ii. ETSU R 97 standards for noise assessment;
- iii. The policies of the AONB Management Plan.

MD11 - Tourism facilities and visitor accommodation (extract)

1. Tourism, leisure and recreation development proposals that demonstrate they require a countryside location in accordance with MD7 will be permitted where the proposal complements the character and qualities of the site's immediate surroundings, adds to the Shropshire offer, does not adversely impact on the wider tranquillity of the area and meets the requirements in Policies CS5, CS16, MD7, MD12 and relevant local and national guidance. Proposals within and adjoining the Shropshire Hills AONB should pay particular regard to landscape impact and mitigation.

Explanation (extract)

2. In areas of recognised scenic and environmental value proposals must pay particular regard to the qualities of the area and the reasons for designation in line with Policies CS6 and CS17, MD12 and the NPPF. Within and adjoining the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty applicants should also have regard to guidance in the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan. Sustainable tourism development plays a vital role in supporting the local economy but must be sensitive to the qualities of the AONB.

MD12 – Natural and Historic Environment

1. Shropshire Council will require new development proposals to conserve, enhance and restore Shropshire's natural and heritage assets and landscape character in order to support the delivery of CS6 and CS17. Internationally and nationally important habitats, sites of wildlife conservation and geological interest and legally protected species will be afforded the highest level of protection in accordance with the relevant legislation and policy. Great weight will also be accorded to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills AONB having regard to the AONB Management Plan. Heritage assets will be safeguarded in accordance with their significance.

2. Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following assets:

- I. the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;
- II. locally designated sites;
- III. priority species;
- IV. priority habitats
- V. valued woodlands, trees and hedges;
- VI. designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance;
- VII. geological assets;
- VIII. visual amenity;
- IX. the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area in which the proposal is located.

will be rejected unless:

- i. the social or economic benefits of the development proposal can be demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm to the assets; and
- ii. there is no satisfactory alternative means of delivering the proposal

In these circumstances, a hierarchy of mitigation then compensation measures will be sought through planning conditions and agreements. Proposals should demonstrate that on-site measures are not feasible, before off-site measures will be considered. All mitigation and compensation provisions will also be required to include the following as appropriate:

- I. long term sustainable management plans, including proposals for implementation

II. for heritage and geological assets, measures to record the loss of significance to the asset and to advance understanding in a manner proportionate to the asset's importance and the level of impact

3. Proposals which deliver positive benefits for natural and heritage assets and landscape character will be supported where they comply with other Local Plan policies. Support will be given to proposals which appropriately conserve, enhance, restore or re-create assets, in particular where these improve the condition, extent, value or significance of those assets which are recognised as being at risk and/or in poor condition.

4. In addition, proposals in Nature Improvement Areas and those affecting biodiversity or geodiversity interests at a landscape scale, including across administrative boundaries and in the Shropshire Hills AONB, will be encouraged to contribute positively to the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of that area. Partnership working will be encouraged where appropriate, to achieve this objective, in accordance with policies CS8, CS9 and CS17.

Explanation (extracts)

7. The connections between natural and heritage assets are identified and protected by policy CS17. Opportunities to deliver landscape wide improvements to these networks exist in the Shropshire Hills AONB, Nature Improvement Areas and Priority Areas for Biodiversity Action. Increasing the connectivity of assets both within and between such areas provides benefits for the natural and historic environment.

8. The Shropshire Hills AONB covers 23% of Shropshire's land area and a small part of Telford and Wrekin Council's area. The designation's statutory purpose is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This encompasses biodiversity, geodiversity, heritage, tranquillity, dark skies and the way in which the many natural and human elements combine to create the area's unique and valued special qualities.

9. Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council jointly produce the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan. This is a statutory document, required under section 89(2) of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 to contain Shropshire Council's and Telford & Wrekin Council's policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. The Management Plan sets out the special qualities of the AONB and a number of policies adopted by Shropshire Council. It should be regarded as a material consideration in planning decisions.

21. At a larger scale, the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan includes actions which would enhance the natural beauty and contribute to the greater enjoyment and understanding of this protected landscape.