



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 18 October 2011 9.30am	Item 8
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AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009-14 EVALUATION

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01588 674088 Fax 01588 674099

Summary

This paper provides some brief background to support the workshop session to be held at the meeting on this topic.

Recommendation

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

Background

1. The second statutory AONB Management Plan is now half way through its five year period, and it is timely to start thinking about evaluation and the review process. The legal requirement from Sections 89-90 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 is for local authorities to review adopted and published Management Plans at intervals of not more than five years. This means the process must be complete with a new or updated Plan in place by the end of March 2014. In 2006, in advance of the last review round, the Countryside Agency produced a document of guidance on the review process. Natural England have not yet indicated whether new guidance will be issued, but it seems likely that some principles from the previous guidance will continue i.e. the review process should be inclusive and drive forward the status of and support for the Management Plan, but the process should be proportionate to the continuing effectiveness of the current Plan, and focus on areas where change or improvement is necessary. A 'blank sheet' approach is not necessary.
2. A number of aspects may be usefully considered at this mid-term stage:
 - The usefulness of the Plan as a reference text, and which areas most need updating or adding to.
 - Changes in the wider strategic and policy context, and the continuing relevance of the five Strategic Priorities and the 35 objectives.
 - The influence of the Plan's Policies in decisions affecting the AONB, especially through planning.
 - Whether any Policies (local authority approved) or Positions (AONB Partnership approved) need changing or adding to.
 - The usefulness and effectiveness of the Management Plan Actions, both to influence and steer activity, and its update as a means of reporting and monitoring progress. (It has not been possible to prepare the normal annual update of Actions for this October meeting, due to the pressure of other work).

- What level of condition monitoring of the AONB (as in the headline indicators of outcomes used in the State of the AONB section, and distinct from 'activity' monitoring) will be possible given the reduced resources available from many key organisations, including the AONB Partnership, local authorities, Natural England and other statutory bodies. Natural England are currently working with Defra and the National Association for AONBs to develop a new framework for environmental outcome monitoring.
3. Members are encouraged to give some thought to these areas and their own views on the Management Plan in advance of the meeting. Additional copies of the Plan will be available at the meeting.

<p>List of Background Papers Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14, available at http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/looking-after/management-plan/ Evaluation of 2004-9 Management Plan http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Evaluation-of-2004-9-Management-Plan.pdf</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 None</p>