



Shropshire Council  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

Date: Monday, 11 June 2018

**Committee: Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

**Date:** Tuesday, 19 June 2018  
**Time:** 9.30 am  
**Venue:** Silvester Horne Institute, High Street, Church Stretton, SY6 6BY

You are requested to attend the above meeting.

The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter  
Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

**Members of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

James Williamson (Chairman)	Paul Davis
Hilary Claytonsmith (Vice Chairman)	Ian Dormor
Cecilia Motley (Vice Chairman)	Patrick Edwards
Heather Kidd	Carol Griffiths
Robert Tindall	Robert Harris
David Turner	Alan Jones
Chris Turley	Sue Jones
Alison Caffyn	Jenny Joy
George Chancellor	Bill Klemperer
John Long	Sue Lee
Joe Manifold	Marc Liebrecht
Andrew Wood	Hazel MacDowell
John Woolmer	David McGlade
Mark Hughes	David Mills
Yvonne Holyoak	Andy Pugh
Steve Pennington	Ronald Repath
Martin Pye	Mark Riches
Gillian Binks	David C. Smith
Mike Brogden	Leo Smith
Sarah Bury	Donna Tavenor
Veronica Cossons	

Your Committee Officer is:

**Tim Ward** Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: [tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk)

# **AGENDA**

**1      Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence

**2      Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 1 - 6)**

The note of the meeting held on 6 March 2018 is attached for confirmation

**3      Directions for revision of AONB Partnership Terms of Reference (Pages 7 - 8)**

This paper updates Partnership members on work by the Management Board to revise the Terms of Reference of the Partnership and of its sub-group the Management Board.

**4      AONB Team work programme update (Pages 9 - 12)**

This paper provides a brief update on AONB team work programme activity since the last meeting

**5      Resilient Heritage project - Business Plan and income generation activities (Pages 13 - 16)**

This paper updates Partnership members on the Heritage Lottery funding received for two years for the Partnership and Shropshire Hills AONB Trust to work collaboratively on development of Business Plans and income generation.

**6      AONB Management Plan review - public survey results and discussion (Pages 17 - 32)**

This paper updates Partnership members on the findings from the two month web-based public survey on the Management Plan review, and progress with the Review overall.

**7      Glover Review of National Parks and AONBs - initial discussion on topics in Review Terms of Reference (Pages 33 - 42)**

This agenda item gives Partnership members an opportunity to consider the topics in the forthcoming national review of National Parks and AONBs, and potential areas on which the Partnership may wish to express views.

**8      Date of Next Meeting**

Members are reminded that the next meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership will be held on Tuesday 23 October 2018 at 9.30am



# Agenda Item 2

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership – 19 June 2018 - Minutes of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership held on 6 March 2018



Shropshire Hills AONB  
Partnership  
19 June 2018  
9.30 am

Item  
**2**  
Public

## MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2018 9.30 - 11.55 AM

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

### Present

#### Local Authorities

Shropshire Council

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)

Cllr Robert Tindall

Cllr David Turner

#### Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member

Alison Caffyn

Individual Member

George Chancellor

Individual Member

John Long

Individual Member

Joe Manifold

Individual Member

James Williamson (Chair)

Individual Member

Andrew Wood

Town & Parish Council representative

Yvonne Holyoak

Town & Parish Council representative

Martin Pye

British Horse Society

Ronald Repath

Caring for God's Acre

Gill Binks

Historic England

Alison McDonald

Land Life & Livelihoods

Robert Harris

Longmynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

National Farmers Union

Carol Griffiths

National Trust

Pete Carty

Natural England

Hazel McDowall

Ramblers Association

Sue Jones

Offa's Dyke Association

David McGlade

SASTAK

David Mills

Shropshire Hills Tourism

Paul Davis

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Veronica Cossons

Stretton's Civic Society

Ian Dormor

Walford & North Shropshire College

Phil Ridley

**Observers/Officers**

Shropshire Council

Tim Jenkins (Heritage and Culture Manager)  
Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Staff Team Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

**17 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 17.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 17.2 Apologies for absence had been received from Sarah Bury (CPRE), Hilary Claytonsmit (Town & Parish Council Rep), Heather Kidd (Shropshire Council), Bill Klemperer (Historic England), Leo Smith (Upper Onny Wildlife Group/Shropshire Ornithological Society), and Chris Turley (Telford & Wrekin Council)

**18 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 18.1 The Committee Officer advised the meeting that Yvonne Holyoak had been omitted from the list of those present at the meeting. It was agreed that her name should be added.
- 18.2 RESOLVED:

That subject to the above, the note of the meeting held on 14 November 2017 be agreed as a true record.

**19 Defra feedback on Conservation Board request and next steps**

- 19.1 The meeting considered the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which updated members on progress with the request to form a Conservation Board.
- 19.2 The Chairman informed the meeting that we had been advised, that as there was to be a review of designated landscapes, which had been announced in the 25 year Environment Plan, it was unlikely that the request for Conservation Board status would be granted at this stage. He advised members that he and the AONB Partnership Manager, together with Phillip Dunne MP would be meeting with the DEFRA Minister on 21 March to discuss the matter further, and that he would report back to members after this meeting.
- 19.3 Dr Dormer thanked the Chairman and Officer for all the work that they had put in to preparing the submission. Mr Chancellor commented that this work would not be wasted as the work done to look at how the AONB is managed will guide the development of any other structure that may be considered.
- 19.4 The Chairman proposed that the Transition Board revert to its previous name of Management Board. This was agreed. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the

meeting that the Management Board would need to meet as soon as possible, to consider other options.

- 19.5 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that it was proposed that a consultation process to look at the possible options would be carried out with stakeholders, including the Partnership, AONB staff and the trustees of the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust.

## 20 **AONB team work programme 2017-18 brief updates**

- 20.1 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which updated members on the AONB Team Work Programme.
- 20.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that in order to complete some parts of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, agreement had been reached with the HLF to extend some of the staff contracts for a short period and that work was ongoing to complete projects and develop legacy arrangements for some of the activities.
- 20.3 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that a contract had been secured for Cath Landles to act as Area Facilitator for the Uplands Commons Project, working 10 days per month for 20 months. He advised the meeting that Joy Howells, who was currently the Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager had been appointed as the National Project Manager for the Commons project and that she would be working on this out of the AONB Office in Craven Arms for 3.5 days per week. He informed members that Joy would be working for the AONB Partnership for the remaining 1.5 days per week as Funding and Programmes Officer.
- 20.4 Mr Chancellor asked how Cath Landles' appointment would impact on her other work especially the delivery of the John Muir Award work. The AONB Partnership Manager informed him that work was ongoing to develop a Youth Project which would include the John Muir Award work and that potential funding for this was currently being considered.
- 20.5 The AONB Manager informed the meeting that a second application had been made to the HLF for a Resilient Heritage grant to support the funding of the Funding and Programmes Officer's post, together with some consultancy work on business planning and development of income streams.
- 20.6 The Chairman thanked the AONB Manager and his team for the tremendous amount of work that they did.

## 21 **AONB team work programme and budget for 2018-19**

- 21.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which set the 2018 – 19 budget and Team Work Programme.
- 21.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that for a number of years the contribution of the two local authorities to the core budget fell below the 25% expected to match the DEFRA funding and that up to now the balance had been met from earned income, and that this need to achieve income had sometimes been at the expense of core

activity. He had advised the meeting that at its last meeting the Transition Board had agreed that financial contributions would be sought from member organisations.

- 21.3 In response to a query the AONB Manager advised Members that there was no suggested amount due to the great variety on size and type of organisation. Following a request the AONB Partnership Manager agreed to write to all member organisations requesting funding.
- 21.4 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that the Transition Board had discussed proposals to seek financial contributions from Parish Councils within the AONB. Members made suggestions about the timing and nature of approaches to Parish Councils.

## 22 **Vacancies for Transition Board and for a Shropshire Hills AONB Trust Trustee**

- 22.1 The meeting considered the report of the AONB Manager which advised of vacancies for a member on the Transition Board and for a trustee on the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust.
- 22.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that due to increasing work commitments Janine Hayter had resigned as a Parish Council Representative on the Partnership and consequently as a member of the Transition Board and as a Partnership representative on the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust. He asked members to contact him if they were interested in either or both of the vacancies.
- 22.3 Mr Chancellor suggested that as not all members were present an email should be sent to all members advising them of the vacancies. It was agreed that this would be done.
- 22.4 The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that he would be contacting the unsuccessful applicants for the Parish Council seats from last autumn to see if they would be interested in filling the vacancy for a town and parish council representative and if this was unsuccessful he would make need to make a new call to parish councils.
- 22.5 The Chairman paid tribute to the amount of work Janine had done during her time on the Partnership.

## 23 **AONB Management Plan review**

- 23.1 The meeting received a presentation from the AONB Manager which gave an update on progress with the AONB Management Plan Review, set out some key statistics and outlined some of the priorities for the 2019 -24 Plan.
- 23.2 The meeting then held a workshop session on different aspects of the plan priorities.

## 24 **NAAONB proposals for influencing new government environmental land management system**

- 24.1 Members considered the report of the AONB Partnership Manager provided an outline of the proposal that the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) was developing to make

to DEFRA for the involvement of AONB Partnerships in the government's new post-Brexit environmental land management schemes.

- 24.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that the NAAONB had been in discussion with DEFRA about the potential for AONBs to influence, support and deliver some aspects of the new schemes. He then outlined the proposals.
- 24.3 Members welcomed and supported the proposals and commented that it would be necessary to include sufficient in the Management Plan to cover the proposals.

## 25 **Date of Next Meeting**

- 25.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership would be held on 19 June 2018 at 9.30am.

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<p><u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  19<sup>th</sup> June 2018</p>	<p><u>Item</u> <b>3</b></p>
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## DIRECTIONS FOR REVISION OF AONB PARTNERSHIP TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper updates Partnership members on work by the Management Board to revise the Terms of Reference of the Partnership and of its sub-group the Management Board. The intention is to bring new draft documents to the next Partnership meeting in October for endorsement, before formal approval of the Terms of Reference is sought from both Councils.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the activity to revise the Terms of Reference for the Partnership and Management Board.

### Background

Following our meeting in London with Defra Minister Lord Gardiner on 21<sup>st</sup> March, the Partnership agreed in April through email correspondence the following:

- to put aside alternative independent options until the findings of the national review are known, and
- for the Management Board to look at possible refinements to the Partnership's current Terms of Reference, to bring as recommendations to the Partnership next meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June, before seeking formal approval of these by both Councils.

The Management Board on 6<sup>th</sup> April agreed to form a sub-group to look at the Terms of Reference, made up of James Williamson, Tim Jenkins, John Long, Cecilia Motley and Hilary Claytonsmit, with Phil Holden in attendance. The sub-group met on 26<sup>th</sup> April and on 11<sup>th</sup> May, and reported back to the Management Board meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

Tim Jenkins had received advice from Shropshire Council's Legal team recommending a fuller revision of the Terms of Reference, since they currently include broader things about the AONB structure that go beyond strict terms for a Committee. Advice was also that the Terms of Reference for the Management Board should be in a separate document, which would be for the Partnership to approve and not the Councils. It was confirmed that, as a Joint Advisory Committee under the Local Government Act 1972, delegation by the Councils to the Partnership or Management Board of decision making powers on delivery is not possible. The second sub-group meeting considered a first draft of new Terms of Reference for the Partnership and for the Management Board (proposed to be re-named) which had been

prepared by Tim Jenkins and James Williamson. These were discussed further at the Management Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> July and it was agreed not to bring recommended drafts of new Terms of Reference to this June Partnership meeting, but instead to the October meeting after further work.

**List of Background Papers**

Papers of the Management Board and sub-groups are available at

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/aonb-partnership/partnership/management-board-meetings/>.

**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 in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

**Appendices**

None

# Agenda Item 4



<p><u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  19<sup>th</sup> June 2018</p>	<p><u>Item</u> <b>4</b></p>
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## AONB TEAM WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper provides a brief update on AONB team work programme activity since the last meeting.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the information provided.

### Background

**TAKING ACTION - on the ground and in our communities - to conserve and enhance natural beauty and to promote enjoyment and understanding.**

#### Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme

The scheduled end of the Scheme was 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Short extensions to contracts for three of the LPS staff were all finished by 18<sup>th</sup> May. Most of the final claims and reporting work is completed. Work continues on development of a number of legacy projects.

#### River Clun Recovery Project (WREN funded)

Work on alternative stock watering has been completed on the Clinton Brook as part of the Environment Agency's 'Unmuddying the Waters' project. Contract works for improvement of several drinking bays are also in preparation, and aftercare has been carried out on tree planting sites. The River Clun was visited by staff working on the River Torridge in Devon.

#### Upper Teme habitat opportunity mapping

This contract for Natural England has been completed and follow-up work is in discussion.

#### Sustainable Tourism delivery

The Shuttles service started on 12<sup>th</sup> May with new operator Boultons. A new Shuttles Supporters scheme has been launched and is raising funds via the AONB Trust. The verifier for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is visiting in July.

### 'Our Common Cause' Upland Commons project

Cath Landles is acting as the Area Facilitator for the Shropshire Hills area of this national project. She has attended a training session at Dartmoor and is undertaking one to one discussions with key stakeholders at the three commons in our area involved in the project – Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty.

### Project development

A detailed Shropshire Hills bid for inclusion in the Woodland Trust's national 'Trees Outside Woodlands' proposed HLF project was shortlisted but unfortunately not finally included. Follow-up work is going on with Woodland Trust to see if aspects of this can be implemented any other way.

A meeting with partners has been held for the proposed Monument Volunteers project. Meetings have been held with National Trust partners for the community and farm business aspects of the 'Stepping Stones' project.

An application was submitted for the Environment Agency/ Natural England 'Water Environment Grant' in partnership with Severn Rivers Trust. This would provide capacity for improved advice to farmers regarding the water environment.

The Marches Crayfish project is under way and surveys of native crayfish are being commissioned.

A temporary post is being developed to work on bringing the proposed Monument Volunteers project and Youth project to fruition.

We are involved in a Shropshire Hills Social Forestry network – looking to develop activity to benefit people's wellbeing in a woodland environment, especially for vulnerable groups.

## **INFLUENCING OTHERS - lead and champion the delivery of public benefits from the AONB, working strategically and collaboratively from policy to grassroots level.**

### AONB Management Plan

See item 6.

### AONB Trust, Conservation Fund and Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB

Conservation Fund 2017-18 final claims and 2018-19 grant offers are now mostly completed. A number of volunteers are helping with Friends recruitment at public events and shows.

### Planning

Input is being provided to Shropshire Council regarding new guidance on poultry sheds and ammonia. A meeting with the South Planning team leader is arranged.

### Local partnership working

Meetings have been held of the Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership, Wrekin Forest Partnership and Clun Catchment Partnership. We have had involvement with a Corve Dale Field Officers group regarding catchment management.

### Input to strategies

Detailed submissions have been made to consultations on Defra agriculture policy and National Planning Policy Framework consultations.

We hosted a visit by Andrea Ledward, Defra Natural Environment Director. Input has been made to Forestry design plan consultations and to a Conservation Management Plan for Offa's Dyke.

#### Communications & public awareness

The AONB 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary has been widely publicised, and plans developed for the Hay Meadow Festival on Sat 7<sup>th</sup> July, and 19<sup>th</sup> June event at Church Stretton.

#### Support for groups

Support has been given to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund project by Land Life & Livelihoods and the Upper Clun Community Wildlife group.

Support also given to Bishop's Castle and Church Stretton Walking Festivals.

### **MANAGING OUR BUSINESS - develop a robust, effective and financially sustainable AONB organisation.**

#### Structure and governance

The decision was made by the Partnership not to pursue other independent structures and instead to refine Terms of Reference. Meetings of Management Board and a sub-group have been held to pursue this. The national Review of AONBs is getting under way (see item 7).

Data protection training has been undertaken and systems updated.

#### Resilient Heritage project

(see agenda item 5)

#### **List of Background Papers**

The fuller Team Work Programme as submitted to Defra is available to members on request.

#### **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 in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

#### **Appendices**

none

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# Agenda Item 5



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  19 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<u>Item</u>  <b>5</b>
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## RESILIENT HERITAGE PROJECT - BUSINESS PLAN AND INCOME GENERATION

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper updates Partnership members on the Heritage Lottery funding received for two years for the Partnership and Shropshire Hills AONB Trust to work collaboratively on development of Business Plans and income generation.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the project.

### Background

HLF's 'Resilient Heritage' funding stream is to help organisations involved with heritage to develop themselves and their future capacity. We were successful in March with a second application for this, jointly between the AONB Partnership and Shropshire Hills AONB Trust. The grant is for £38,100 over two years and the activities are as follows:

**Develop two Business Plans** - for the AONB Partnership and for the AONB Trust, identifying complementarity and areas of collaborative working between the two. Business Plans to include fund-raising strategy, work priorities, financial targets, and risk assessment against the achievement of the Plans.

**Develop one formal Memorandum of Agreement** between the AONB Partnership and the AONB Trust, to set out the relationship, responsibilities and framework for financial interactions.

**Establish and implement two linked Communications and Engagement Plans** for the AONB Partnership and for the AONB Trust, identifying complementarity and areas of collaborative working. The public profile of the AONB Trust needs to achieve the right balance of connection with the existing AONB organisation and the Trust's independent role.

Following some key decisions early on, implementing communications and engagement runs through the full two years of the project, underpinning other elements. Activities currently proposed include portable displays, leaflets, promotion of Friends scheme, supporter giving appeal, business engagement scheme and legacy scheme.

#### **Skills Audit for 24 individuals**

AONB Partnership staff, Transition Board members and Trustees will undertake a skills audit against future skills identified as required to fulfil the Business Plans.

**Training and development for 25 individuals** – ensuring the relevant people have the key skills required in a small organisation. Training topics will be identified from the skills audit, but for Board members this may include training related to the AONB remit and involvement with national AONB events; for staff may include management, business and fund-raising skills; for Trustees may include trustees' legal responsibilities and fund-raising.

**Developing income generation -**

**Promotion and recruitment drive on Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB scheme.**

A new leaflet will be printed and promotion undertaken.

**Target: 75 new Friends members recruited.**

**Developing income generation -**

**Pilot a 'supporter giving' appeal scheme.**

A specific, locally-focused fundraising appeal will be launched by the Trust for a project aiming to address serious path erosion on the popular hill of Caer Caradoc in the Stretton Hills.

**Target: £3,000 raised.**

**Developing income generation -**

**Launch business sponsorship scheme.**

With external specialist consultancy advice, a business sponsorship scheme will be established for the AONB Trust. Where appropriate, members of the team may be involved e.g. to offer volunteering opportunities if businesses wish to get involved in ways other than financial support.

**Target: 20 businesses engaged.**

**Developing income generation -**

**Establish legacy scheme.**

With external specialist consultancy advice, a legacy scheme will be established for the AONB Trust.

**Developing income generation -**

**Expand trading activity.**

External specialist consultancy advice will be sought for trading activities by the AONB Partnership.

Where charitable status will not make a difference, trading has the potential to contribute directly to the core AONB budget.

**Target: 2 new products developed and on-line trading mechanism established.**

**Developing income generation -**

**Explore establishing one consultancy operation.**

External specialist consultancy advice will be sought on the possibility of establishing a consultancy operation by the AONB Partnership. This would be a development from existing modest levels of fee-earning work which are secured only on a reactive basis.

**Funding and Programmes Officer role**

A new 24 month 1.5 days/week post in the AONB team will be created to focus on the development of new projects and securing external funding for these, working with other team members and partners.

Known priorities for project development include:

- A youth engagement project rolling out the John Muir Award and Youth Rangers around the AONB.
- Proposals to take advantage of the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative in the Wrekin area.
- Rivers and catchment work to follow on from the current WREN-funded River Clun Recovery Project.
- Additional funding for Caer Caradoc path erosion project.
- A project on road verge management for biodiversity.

**Target: Four project grant funding applications submitted.**

**Evaluation**

An evaluation process will be established at the start, alongside the Business Planning exercise. The process will be used throughout the project to evaluate success and plan further activity. Expert advice will support development of a detailed evaluation plan, facilitate workshops, potentially undertake surveys with stakeholders, reporting and recommendations. The Resilient Heritage Strength Checker tool will be used further as one means of monitoring and evaluating progress.

**List of Background Papers**

Papers of the Management Board on this topic are available at

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/aonb-partnership/partnership/management-board-meetings/>.

**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 in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

**Appendices**

None

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# Agenda Item 6



<p><u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  19<sup>th</sup> June 2018</p>	<p><u>Item</u> <b>6</b></p>
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## AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW - PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper updates Partnership members on the findings from the two month web-based public survey on the Management Plan review, and progress with the Review overall.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

### Background

Public survey - The public survey was adapted from one recently used by another AONB and was open during April and May. It was widely publicised, and 203 responses were received. The questions and analysis of answers are given in Appendix 1. The answers to Q8 are given in full for interest as it is not really possible to summarise these.

Workshop at 6<sup>th</sup> March Partnership meeting – the write up of this is given in Appendix 2.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping – Some comments were received from organisations and further discussions are needed, which will help to strengthen the Management Plan.

State of the AONB report - Discussions have been held with relevant organisations about the reasons behind some of the trends observed. There is some work still to do for the State of the AONB report to be completed and published.

NAAONB discussions with Defra - The NAAONB is actively engaging with Defra regarding proposals for new environmental land management schemes. This will feed into the Management Plan.

Response to agriculture command paper - A response to this consultation was submitted from the AONB Partnership, some of which will be relevant for inclusion in the new AONB Management Plan.

Revised timetable for draft plan publication for consultation - The timetable for approving a new draft Plan for public consultation has been put back from June to the October Partnership meeting. This should still allow time for the necessary stages to completion by the end of March 2019.

Planning meeting – a meeting between AONB Partnership representatives (including Councillors & Vice Chairs) and members of the Shropshire Council south Planning team is to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> June. This will focus on areas of the Management Plan which can be improved regarding policy and guidance on key planning issues. A corresponding meeting with Telford & Wrekin Council is also being held.

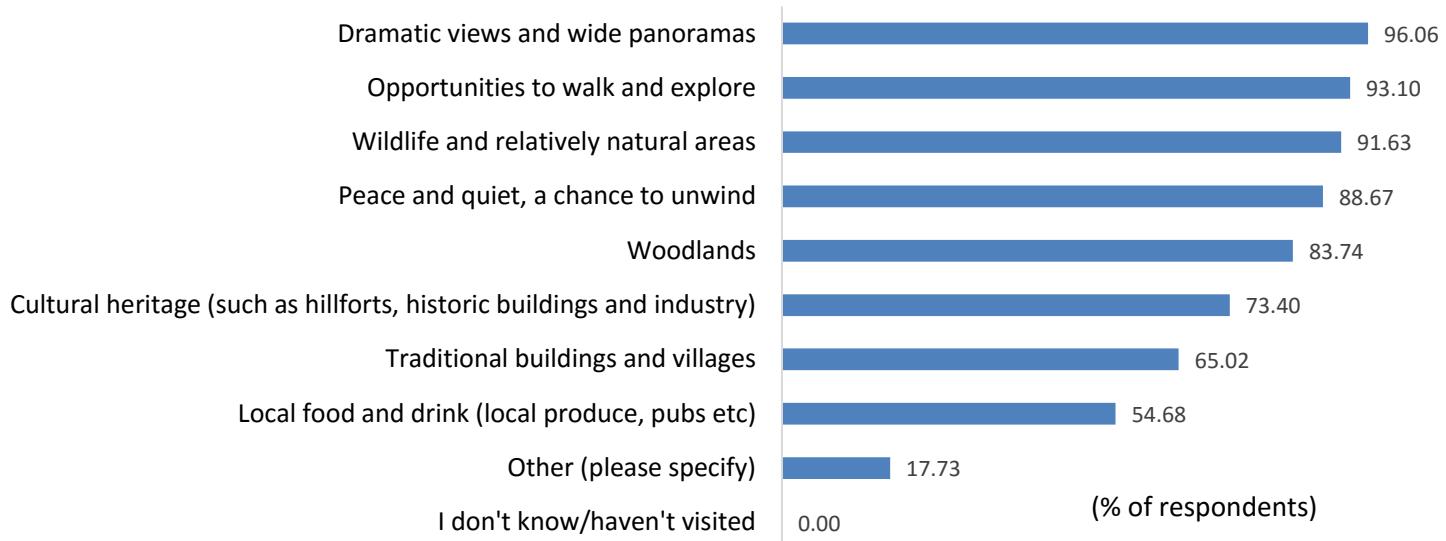
Natural Environment group – an officer focus group on natural environment and biodiversity priorities is planned.

Resourcing – Some additional help to support the Plan review may be contracted.

<b>List of Background Papers</b> None
<b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b> The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
<b>Environmental Appraisal</b> The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
<b>Risk Management Appraisal</b> Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
<b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.
<b>Appendices</b> Appendix 1 Summary analysis of Management Plan review public survey  Appendix 2 Write-up of workshop at AONB Partnership meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> March

## Appendix 1 Summary analysis of Management Plan review public survey

### 1. What do you value about the Shropshire Hills (tick all that apply)

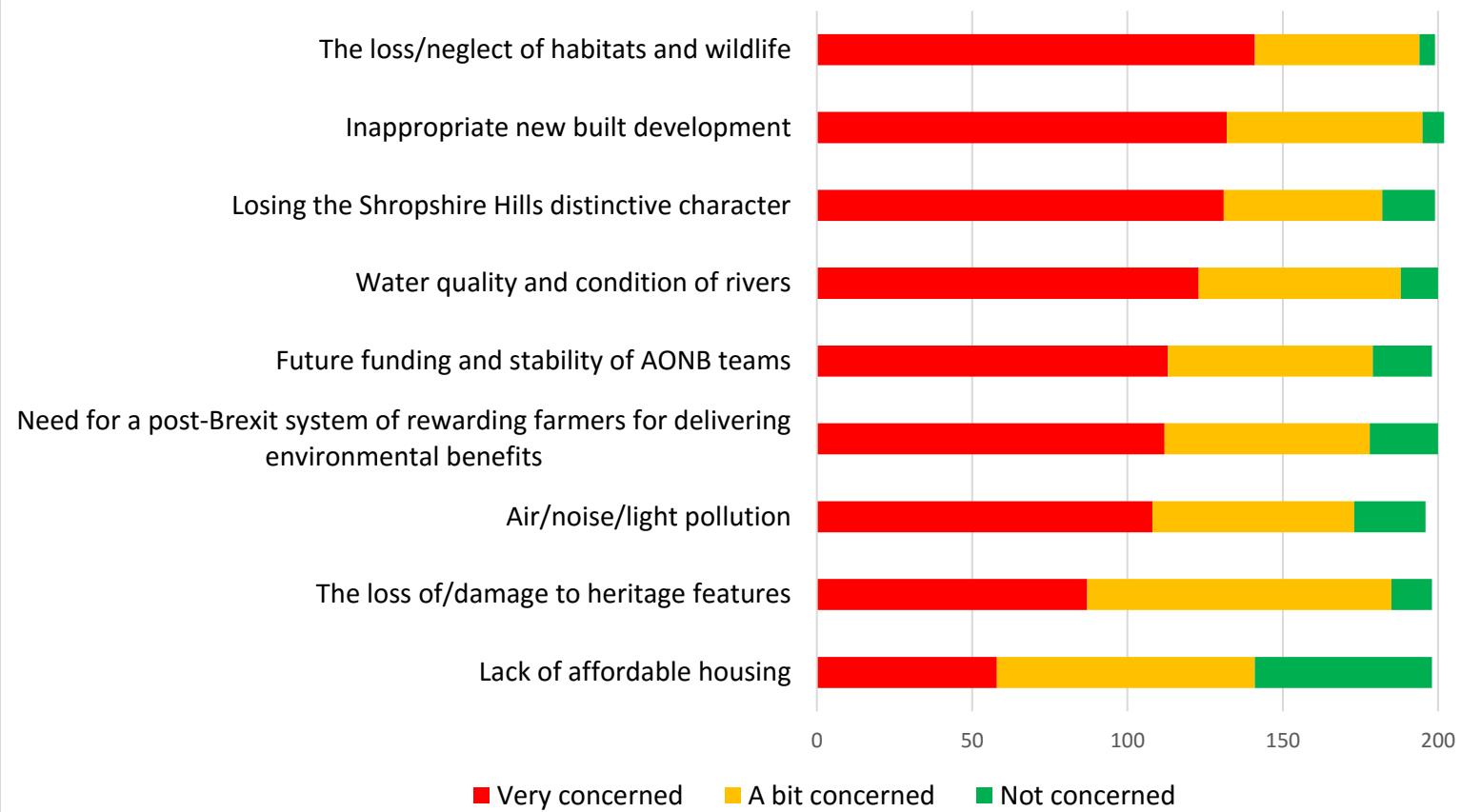


### 2. What ONE thing do you most value about the Shropshire Hills?

Wild Valley Access Environment Dramatic Wilderness Hills  
Church Stretton Wildlife Freedom  
Peace and Quiet Heritage Walking  
Unspoiled Beauty Solitude Landscape Fact  
Natural Open Views Unspoilt Development Space Rural  
Place Tranquility

(Words used most often are shown larger)

**3. The Shropshire Hills AONB landscape is protected by law to conserve and enhance its special qualities. Do you share any of the following concerns about the future of the AONB?**



**4. What ONE thing concerns you most about the future of the Shropshire Hills?**

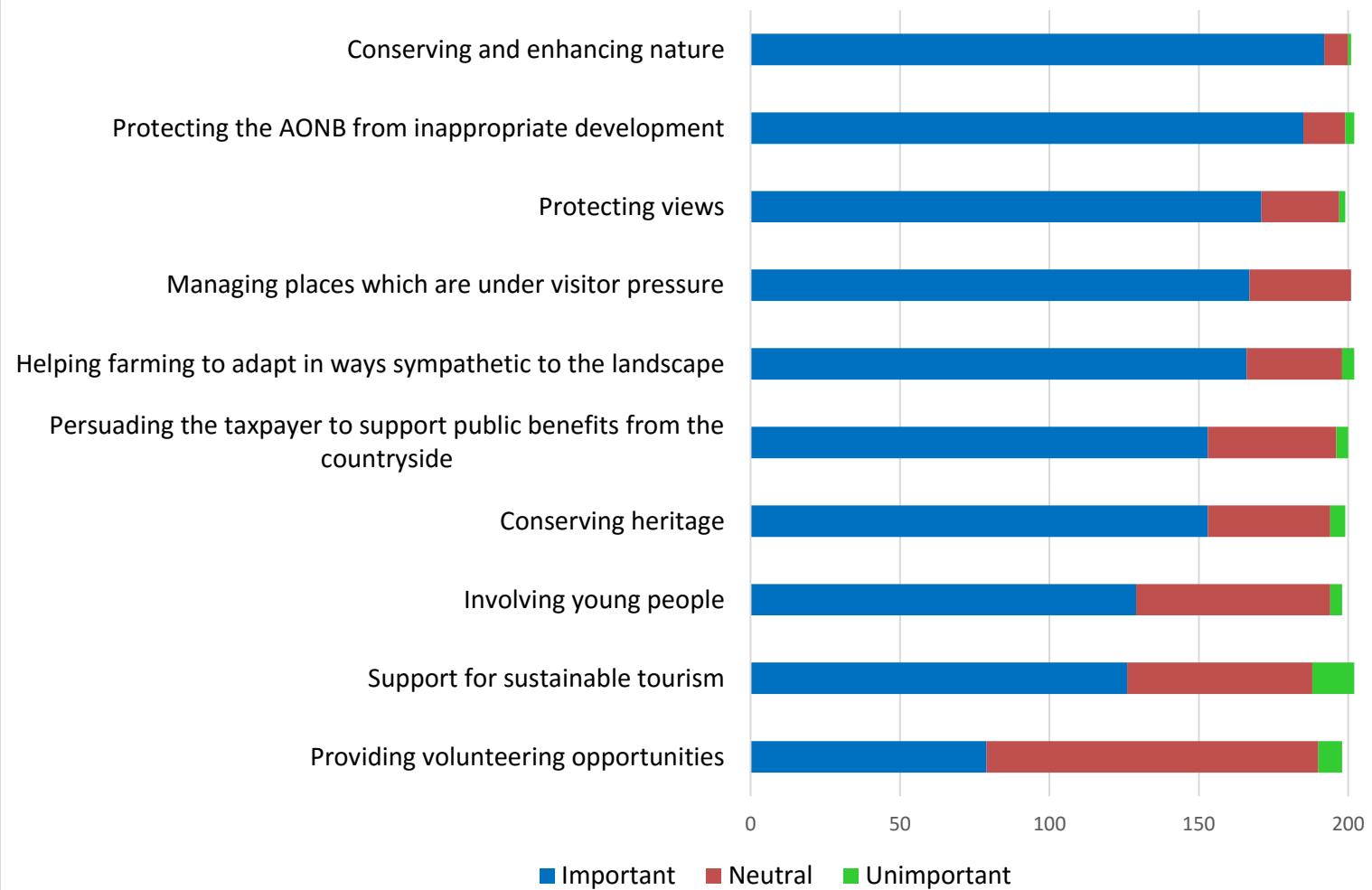
Access Brexit New Building Generations  
Funding Footpaths Farming Overuse Loss  
Government Development Park Housing  
Live Hills Pollution Shropshire Land  
Environment Selling Landscape Human Planning

(Words used most often are shown larger)

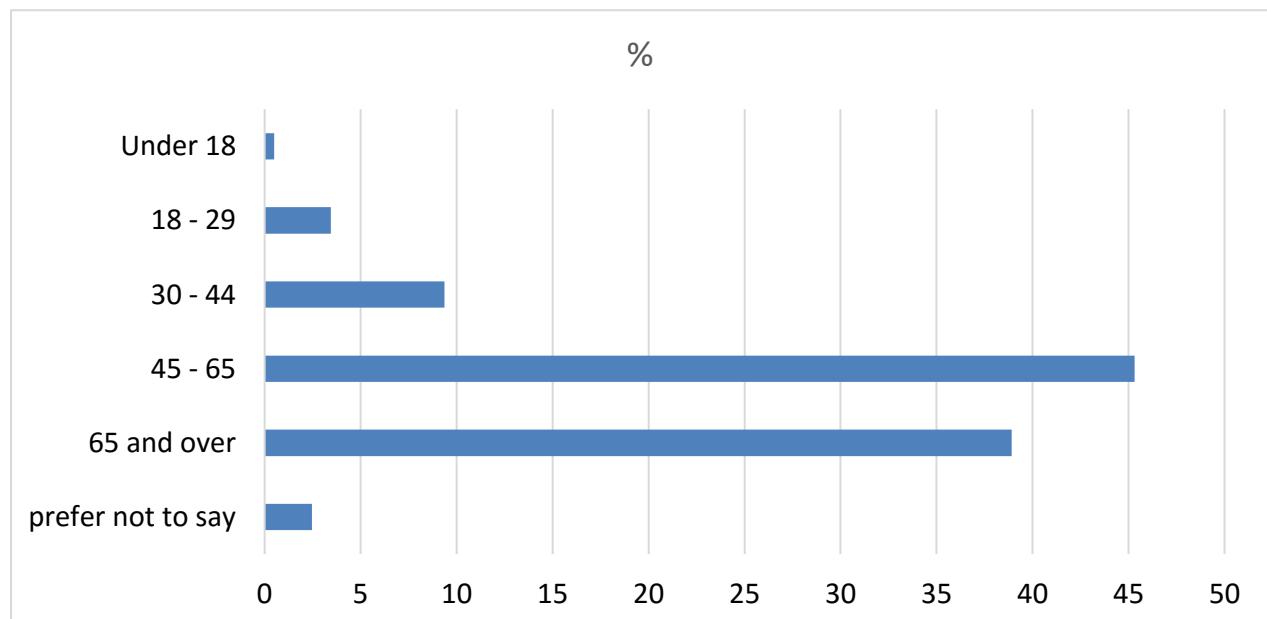
5. Which three words would you use to describe the Shropshire Hills?

Dramatic Space Unspoilt Rugged Tranquil Outstanding  
Quiet Special Peaceful Natural Beautiful  
Majestic Wild Unspoiled Stunning Amazing  
Scenic Remote Breathtaking Rural Green  
  
Accessible Historic Rolling Spectacular Relaxing Rural  
Wild Remote Quiet Fragile Beautiful Dramatic  
Peaceful Green Unspoilt Rugged Tranquil  
Serene Natural Wide Stunning Magnificent Walking  
  
Wildlife Magical Timeless Habitat Inspiring Farming  
Accessible Special Historic Invigorating  
Peaceful Calming Unspoilt Breathtaking  
Beautiful Heritage Natural Secret Tranquil  
Distinctive Wild Green Dramatic Living Rural Risk  
Unspoiled Biodiverse

**6. Over the next ten years, how important are the following to you?**



**7. What age group are you?**



## **8. Do you have any other comments about the future of the Shropshire Hills?**

(comments listed in full)

Provide more honeypot visitor attractions in urban situations to take pressure away from the more important wildlife areas and designated sites. Key wildlife species are being unduly disturbed.
If walkers are allowed to increase and walk over the LongMynd and Stiperstones during the nesting season, all the ground nesting birds will be lost. They should be closed to the walking public for the nesting season. If people really care about our birds, they won't mind not being allowed to walk up there during this time. They can still drive over the hills but should not disturb the birds by walking there.
Trial some 5m square enclosures on the moorland for 10 years to see vegetation changes. Also seek to create some wild areas with no grazing or other management and monitor wildlife. Areas as large as possible
Re-wilding, big-style, please
Erosion is a major issue
No
Keep them free and open, but don't tell the masses.
Do not allow taxpayers money to be used to support agricultural practises that denude the hills of wildlife.
Essential to preserve open wild spaces for future generations
I grew up in this area, although there is a risk to the area with the possibility of new inappropriate housing projects, it is vital that homes are supplied at a low cost for the 'younger' generation. I currently rent because house prices are so inflated, I would love to be able to afford my own home in the area and raise my family, but this is just not possible, currently. If 'cheap' homes were built in the area, there should be strict criteria for purchasers. For example, they have a sound local connection and have been born into the area. I also worry about increased tourism, especially to areas such as the Stiperstones and what effect this may have on habitats and landscapes.
We need to protect them for future generations
no but your survey suggests you have not thought much about the health benefits of access to the hills, or their contribution to the local economy. The survival of youth hostels in the area is important (they have disappeared in many parts of the country).
I think it's a wonderful asset for the area which has many years of bringing people to the area, if looked after properly
As Birmingham, Wolves and Telford and Shrewsbury continue to grow having the green lung of the hills for urban communities will become even more vital as well as for those of us lucky enough to live here
None
I worry about increasing visitor numbers due to population increase having a detrimental impact on the largely unspoiled landscape.

Focussing tourism and associated development on other areas to take the strain off Church Stretton and Cardingmill Valley. Areas to the west of the Long Mynd - Asterton, Wentnor could benefit economically from tourism related development,
No
No
No
Shropshire Hills are unique and all the hills are different in their own way
No
No to building houses in the AONB. Keep it quiet, do not exploit for tourism. Those that appreciate quiet, peaceful countryside will find it anyway.
Finding ways to work with farmers and land owners to allow the hills to not become just a tourist destination is important. They are a working landscape and must not become a tourist driven economy like, say, the Lakes. Retaining and improving key species is important - e.g. curlew and pearl mussels.
farmers must be allowed to farm and not be restrained by environmental schemes etc
Difficulties of supporting and generating a thriving economy that keeps young families and people employed without jeopardising the existing landscape. Avoiding gentrification whilst conserving and enhancing the environment. Supporting farming whilst promoting biodiversity and sustainability. At its heart the Shropshire Hills are a working landscape and long may that continue.
Look after the Shropshire Hills - once spoiled lost for ever
They need & deserve to be strongly protected and supported
My concern is the gradual chipping away of the AONB
Frightened that they will be / are being developed in such a way that wild life cannot survive
Reduce/remove wild horses on the Mynd. Prevent cyclists from destroying further grassland. Encourage the National Trust to revert Carding Mill Valley to its former peace and quiet. I now refer to it as "the longest car park in Shropshire".
Conserve and protect please!
No. We're lucky to live in such a beautiful place that's protected and cared for by the National Trust.
No
Not always sure there is a holistic approach between AONB and County Council ?????
The future of the aonb should be safe guarded against Councils who should be legally prevented from agreeing housing developments which are contrary to the ethics of the aonb and to their own published standards and conditions for building schemes
The local Council and politicians need to be involved in an overall plan to improve habitats and wildlife.
None
it is important to preserve this beautiful landscape and not allow it to be ruined by development and too much tourism

Overdevelopment and new building seem the biggest threats, and should be prevented at all costs.
Would like to see traffic reduced and effective measures taken to stop motorcycles riding over the hills. Ban this organisation from using the area: <a href="https://www.greenadventuretours.co.uk/">https://www.greenadventuretours.co.uk/</a>
No
Access is it's greatest asset. There should be equal effort to preserve / maintain Public Footpaths, Bridleways & BOAT's. These are the greatest way to experience, engage and enjoy the environment.
Demographic profile too skewed to 60+
They may provide opportunities for natural flood management as part of their management
concerned about inappropriate developments in areas in or near AONB which affect the intrinsic nature of the area which should be championed and cherished.
I feel so fortunate to live in this miraculously beautiful place.
Just keep enjoying them
Work in partnership with those who have governed and kept the landscape
It is vital that our beautiful hills are preserved for the enjoyment of generations to come.
For everyone, for every creature, for every plant and tree.
No
-
No
no
We have a very special landscape, I don't want it to be spoilt in any way.
say no to glamping and chalets.
No
The Shropshire AONB as an authority is not doing enough to protect the area. They have stopped reviewing development plans.
Let's not lose this precious piece of heaven. If it goes...we will never have it back.
Mountbikers causing damage cycling off piste and planning permission being granted for inappropriate housing
don't let national and local politics dictate what is done or not done.
The AONB is above such short term considerations.
Keep the AONB safe for this and future generations
Conservation maintained appropriately for present and future generations to come. Ensure that the young understand the importance and discourage inappropriate use of the country side.
Tourism needs to be encouraged in a co-ordinator way with someone having this as their main job. People love it when they get here but many just pass through without stopping because they don't know what is here.

Need to be protected.
No
It is important they are protected whilst maintaining their tranquility.
They are important geologically and thus needs to be acknowledged in any future planning
We need to protect this fantastic landscape and environment for all concerned. This is likely to need compensation for farmers to allow them to make a living whilst managing the landscape. It will also need to manage inappropriate or potentially destructive visitor pressure. Also concerns around air and water pollution eg on rivers and from chicken sheds
Roads are now mostly too dangerous to ride on & there are not alternative bridlepaths which link up.
Footpaths are being obstructed & lost.
Locally the AONB has supported inappropriate development.
Include diversity
I would like to see the AONB extended to include Wrentham and Church Pulverbatch which are two historic and beautiful villages worth preserving
Love our countryside
The AONB needs to keep the balance between protection and providing an area for people to live and work in. I worry about the impact of Brexit on the support for the environment
We need to seize the opportunity for land subsidy to be acknowledged on numerous fronts, crop yield, land use, biodiversity support
If things don't change to preserve and protect wild areas the future will be disastrous and the Shropshire hills will not recover.
I am concerned about the amount of ivy that is suffocating the trees
Would like to see more tree planting
No
it is important to rejuvenate rural communities by using sites which had housing(now in disrepair) and building affordable homes on these sites in keeping with the landscape
No
no
Try to keep the Shropshire Hills shuttle buses running
A distinctive and beautiful place to live
With the state of many of our rural lanes travel will become increasingly difficult and dangerous for residents and tourists alike. Probably more so for the casual visitor.
.
We need to educate the General Public that the people who look after the landscape is the farming community, without a healthy farming community the landscape and biodiversity will deteriorate
The hills will not go away, so we should make sure they are properly looked after

An independent properly qualified group is required to comment on planning matters due to increasing pressures. The current arrangement does not have the funding or qualified personnel to provide the required expertise.

Don't commercialise popular areas

Farming has made the hills what they are. And farming is the key to their sustainable future. As long as the farming process itself is kept sustainable. If ALL user groups compromise then there is a potential for successful sustainable future. The environmental goals are to be highly prized but not at the expense of sustainable agriculture in the hills.

Some of your questions are subjective so I haven't answered them. retaining the habitat in the SH's is critical and encouraging better farming practices is a vital part of this

We need to invest in infrastructure that not only helps rural communities but tourists and visitors too.

It is sadly being opened up to more and more people for less and less effort by them, tourism is both a blessing and a curse. This was a wild place for people who could bother to get here, now it is open to all comers.

It's an amazing area that's relatively unspoilt. Keeping it that way is the future of its success especially due to its relative small size compared to other national parks/AONB. I love it!!

I think the future of the Shropshire Hills is very much in the balance and were we to lose any more of it to development, poor (modern) land/soil management we may never get it back. Brexit is a huge opportunity for the area as well as a potential threat. The Hills are under so much pressure with farmers needing to make a living, yet also being the custodians of our environment. They need more help and encouragement to farm as sensitively as possible whilst earning a reasonable living. Incoming people often do not really understand farming. There's sometimes an 'us and them' feeling. I think also incoming people - including people like myself! - need more opportunities to understand about how the land is managed and how farming works here. We've been here for 18 years and have fallen in love with the area. I also think the AONB has a huge role to play in the future of the Shropshire Hills, but many people do not know about the AONB, or what it is or does. So more publicity/public awareness would be really good.

The influx of visitors who expect to impose their urban lifestyles/values on the countryside is worrying

Protect them as much as possible

would be disastrous if became a National Park and quite wrong for the AONB to campaign or promote becoming one using public funds. However the area N and S of the A489 should be added into the AONB

Too many visitors are now using the area with no thought to others. i.e events that don't remove signs, farmers that offer inappropriate diversity i.e off road events and a lack of prospects for young people.

No

encourage more action rather than so much talk!

A local bus service is important to support the rural community & need to support local producers and Pubs

Don't try to diversify focal points (eg CMV), allow those who want to find solitude the opportunity to do so.

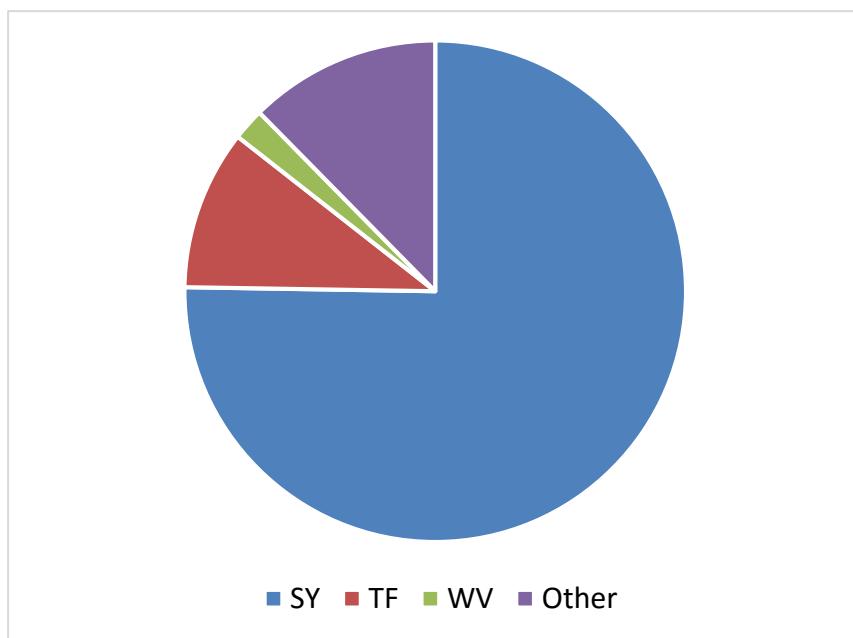
The future of the AONB is unclear
It's a very delicately balanced eco-system. To date, everything seems to be about right but I fear it wouldn't take much to tip said balance.
As a visitor who loves them please don't ever lose the peace, wildness and accessibility of them
Manage tourism in a way that protects the hills for the future
Need to maintain and enhance AONB and community partnerships in environmental conservation schemes
The Shropshire Hills are, luckily for those who live in or near, a nationally much underappreciated resource - their future depends on wise management.
The AONB needs to 'manage' the situation more rather than being just a talking shop for interested parties.
Better signage clearly stating where on the hills mountain bikes are not permitted, and clear instructions to give way to and have regard for walkers using those pathways used by mountain bikers
Preserve them at all costs
No.
No
Our area is unique and beautiful and I feel very lucky to have lived here all my life. It has many special qualities such as the landscape, wildlife and rich farming heritage. However I think what makes our area extra special are the people and communities that live and work here. Without them we are nothing, and we must fight to keep the area accessible for young people to be able to continue living and working here.
Making sure the local communities are supported - thinking about the next generation and listening to their voices.
We must protect the open spaces and natural beauty of our land and stop ruining it with Solar panels when they can be applied to new buildings and industrial units.
no
Do not allow inappropriate building to spoil this beautiful area
To stop encouraging more people to visit the area and for AONB to stop developing sites and activities that only they see as beneficial to the area.
no
Need for sustainability environmentally, demographically and economically
We must support the organisations which do the good work
No
I don't know that anything can be done about this, but I'm concerned that many visitors come to 'use' the AONB primarily to consume spare time and/or for exercise, which they could do anywhere. Many don't seem to look around them and get to know what's special/unique here, and so how they can help protect and preserve the landscape/heritage/nature themselves. I guess this might be addressed by ongoing projects with local schools, with enhanced interpretive content for visitors, with original arts initiatives - much of this happens, again maybe it needs higher profile... Meanwhile I see nothing but good from the AONB team!

Congrats and keep up the good work. If only you had more resources. Maybe we could find (or found) a trust to help; appealing for legacies for lasting support.

there needs to be more meaningful engagement at a community and business level with the AONB Partnership

Don't change its wildness, it's a manmade landscape but it's perfect as it is, it doesn't need to be improved to increase tourism.

**9. What is your postcode?**



## **Appendix 2 Management Plan Workshop responses from AONB Partnership Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Conservation and land management**

- 1. What new things does the Management Plan need to say on these topics?**
- 2. What are your top 3 – 5 actions that the Management Plan should include on these topics?**
  - Examples of real success – the benefits of working with AONB/NE/NT etc (7 ticks)
  - Need to sell the good ideas (6 ticks)
  - More advice for landowners – demo events;  
coalition of the willing!;  
clarity of advice at local level (5 ticks)
  - Get groups of landowners to work together (2 ticks)
  - Government change in attitude will require farmers to do things differently – AONB ideally placed to help with transition (1 tick)
  - Need to be positive, but need not to kid ourselves that there are not problems (1 tick)
  - In wildlife look at new ways of reversing decline
  - Make more info available to show trends
  - \* Joined up in terms of groups & people working together
  - Red Tape & barriers – more support
  - Assessing impact of new techniques & systems on land, positive & negative?
  - Appropriate land management e.g. maize
  - Too many voices giving advice
  - More resources required to give support & advice & manage change
  - Could we use depth of volunteer knowledge to help
  - Environmental improvement should be an input/output of the farm & should be rewarded
  - Visitor pressure on landscape : damaging, need to disperse

### **Planning and development**

- 1. On which planning related topics do policies in the Management Plan need to change?**
- 2. On what topics are more policies or guidance needed and what should new policies or guidance say?**
  - Need to work alongside the planners to provide the steer (7 ticks)
  - Need to be more prescriptive re design guidelines and steer on acceptable development scale (5 ticks)
  - Work with developers (5 ticks)
  - Type of housing is an issue (1 tick)

### **Recreation, tourism and community involvement**

- 1. What new things does the Management Plan need to say on these topics?**
- 2. What are your top 3 – 5 actions that the Management Plan should include on these topics?**

- More about engaging communities, more on the ground, outreach. Low community awareness of the AONB. More work with local groups. Co-ordinating & mobilising local resources. Support & leaderships. More promotion of what the partnership does [\(8 ticks\)](#)
- Conservation tourism – small, managed, valued, linked to businesses [\(6 ticks\)](#)
- Dispersing use of popular PROW promoted routes. Encouraging people away from popular locations [\(5 ticks\)](#)
- Visitor survey, economic impact survey (monitoring different users) – needs repeating [\(3 ticks\)](#)
- car parking – public transport alternatives – cycling [\(1 tick\)](#)
- Identifying areas of AONB most suitable for recreation, farming ..... [\(1 tick\)](#)
- Revisit Clee Hills project (industrial archaeology, recreation, ...) [\(1 tick\)](#)
- Shuttle buses – support needed
- More support for pubs & similar facilities
- More funding needed to support economic development

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# Agenda Item 7



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  19 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<u>Item</u>  <b>7</b>
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## GLOVER REVIEW OF NATIONAL PARKS AND AONBS - INITIAL DISCUSSION ON TOPICS IN REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
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### Summary

This agenda item gives Partnership members an opportunity to consider the topics in the forthcoming national review of National Parks and AONBs, and potential areas on which the Partnership may wish to express views. This paper seeks to give some background information and commentary to inform discussion.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the issues raised.

### Background

A national review of National Parks and AONBs was announced in the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan in March, and in late May the Terms of Reference for this were made public (see Appendix 1). The Review is to be led by the writer and journalist Julian Glover, and is to report during 2019.

The tone and framework for the Review is very positive, about helping protected landscapes to deliver more, and potentially having more of them. It represents the biggest opportunity for positive change for the AONB family overall since the work leading up to changes in the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, and potentially since the original 1949 Act.

It is likely that the Review will open a call for written evidence, followed by some invitations to discussions with the advisory panel. The Terms of Reference also mention visits by the panel. These are very unlikely to involve all AONBs and National Parks, but it is possible that our Conservation Board proposal will be of interest. The AONB Partnership is likely to be asked for its collective view on issues, but individuals involved with it may choose to make their own input.

Some areas of the Review are likely to be of greater interest to the Partnership than others, but it is felt that any options or views should be open for airing at this time given the breadth of the review.

The objectives of the Review are given below, along with some brief commentary and information in relation to recent and historic activity or positions of the Partnership :

*"In the context of meeting both local and national priorities and wider environmental governance, the Review will examine and make recommendations on:"*

1. *The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met*

Issues here include:

- The difference between statutory purposes for AONBs and National Parks (see Appendix 2). The additional statutory purpose for National Parks to encourage enjoyment and understanding, and the additional duty to foster social and economic benefit for communities provide a rounder remit, which would be very appropriate also to AONBs.
- There is no legally accepted definition of 'natural beauty', though some relevant guidance and case law exists. The concept still has relevance, but can create perceptions that visual appearance is the focus rather than the functioning of the environment and landscape and its time-depth of cultural influence and association.
- AONB bodies especially have a very limited degree of influence over key pressures of change in the areas, meaning that effectiveness of delivering their purposes is hampered. AONB Partnership budgets are dwarfed by agri-environment spend within those areas, and the proposals for a greater AONB involvement in future farm environment schemes may help. The relatively low degree of influence of AONB organisations in planning is also a considerable factor. In addition, the expectations and potential for what AONB teams could deliver are not close to being matched by the funding available, and resourcing is a major limitation on our effectiveness.

2. *The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment*

- As described above, the alignment of wording between AONB purposes and the 25 Year Plan is not as good as it should be, for largely historical reasons. There is a need to link more explicitly 'natural beauty' (if this is to be retained) with natural capital and ecosystem services, in order to recognise more fully the value of landscapes in delivering a wide range of benefits to society.
- It is notable that although the AONB remit includes heritage, which comes under the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the stamp of the Defra environmental remit on the review appears strong. It is however stated that it is a cross-Government review. While the strong links to the 25 Year Environment Plan should be welcomed, the links of AONBs to heritage especially should also not be overlooked. The relative absence in the words published on the review so far of a strong drive for protected areas to support the economy is notable, though this would be expected to be a high priority for government, and will no doubt come through in the Review's work.

3. *The case for extension or creation of new designated areas*

- The AONB Partnership commissioned in 2006 a modern landscape study of the AONB boundary (see summary map at Appendix 3). This described the current boundary as largely fit for purpose, but identified small areas where there could potentially be scope

for changes. From this study, the Partnership developed a Management Plan policy not to pursue boundary changes for the Shropshire Hills AONB. This rationale is still felt to be valid, but individuals may have a different view. The proposal for the Review to look at simplifying the processes of designation and boundary change may be a factor.

- Proposals or suggestions for new AONB designation have previously been mooted in neighbouring or nearby areas of both Powys and Herefordshire, which could have implications for the Shropshire Hills AONB if they were to go ahead.
- People occasionally ask if the Shropshire Hills could or should become a National Park. In a few other AONBs, there is a more considerable groundswell for this, although opinions in all areas are likely to be quite divided. Given that AONBs and National Parks are deemed to have the same level of landscape quality and protection in government policy, the issue of perceived 'threat' should not probably be the main factor in any such decisions. The main implications from becoming a National Park would be greater resources and greater control over planning, as National Park Authorities are planning authorities in their own right. It is not known how likely the designation of new National Parks from AONBs is as a result of the review. Some people have previously called for all AONBs to become National Parks so there is one designation which is much more widely understood.

#### 4. How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets

- Individual governance of AONBs is where our Conservation Board proposal fits, and there is potential for the Review to result in either amended possibilities for Conservation Boards, or possibly entirely new governance structures. This may require changes in secondary, or even primary, legislation. Given that potential mechanism may be different, the drivers behind our Conservation Board proposal may be of as much relevance and interest to the Review as the actual detail of what we proposed.
- Collective governance of AONBs probably involves looking at the role of the National Association for AONBs, though this is currently a charity existing mainly to advocate for AONBs and encourage networking and sharing of good practice, and plays no real 'governance' role. There have occasionally been suggestions that Defra funding for AONBs could be distributed by the Association, which would mean more of a governance role, but would probably require some changes in the set-up.
- Interaction with other national assets – it is not entirely clear what this means, but it may refer to other designations which overlap with AONBs and National Parks – including in some cases Heritage Coasts and World Heritage Sites, and in our case – SSSIs, etc.

#### 5. The financing of National Parks and AONBs

The scale of financing for National Parks and AONBs is very different, but the principle of core government funding from Defra is the same. Due to a smaller core, most AONB teams probably generate a greater proportion of their overall funding from externally funded projects than National Park authorities. There should be a strong encouragement to government to match the current positive words on helping protected areas to do

more, with continued and increased government funding. There is at least a decade of experience of concerted effort among AONBs to raise other funds, and while there have been successes and progress, it is clear that it is not at all easy to raise significant alternative funds for core costs. Most AONB teams have more sources of income now including fee earning services, trading, charitable etc, but the sums returned from these are often still small for the effort expended. Fully costing staff time involved would in many cases show a poor rate of return. Trying to source core costs elsewhere inevitably has an impact on delivery and indeed sometimes strategic direction if this has to follow the money. Raising funds for project delivery remains easier and a key part of the business model, though competition for Heritage Lottery Fund funding has increased significantly, and other funds such as WREN's Biodiversity Fund (Landfill tax) have recently closed.

6. *How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations*

This is to be welcomed. We have undertaken projects on most of the key habitat features of our area including rivers, woodlands, upland commons and meadows, but much biodiversity is still in decline and there is so much more which could be done. Greater involvement in new farm environment schemes would be a step forward.

7. *How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing*

The 8 points, under three headings, of this 2016 plan were as follows:

**Inspiring Natural Environments**

1. Connect young people with nature
2. Create thriving natural environments

**Drivers of the Rural Economy**

3. National parks driving growth in international tourism
4. Deliver new apprenticeships in National Parks
5. Promote the best of British Food from National Parks

**National Treasures**

6. Everyone's National Parks
7. Landscape and Heritage in National Parks
8. Health and Wellbeing in National Parks

All of these topics are also relevant to AONBs, and positive recommendations from the Review in this area are to be welcomed.

8. *How well National Parks and AONBs support communities.*

When National Park authorities carry out the Park purposes they also have the duty to '*seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks*'. There is no such explicit duty for AONBs in general, though there is for AONB Conservation Boards.

Support for communities has in the past been delivered through things like the Sustainable Development Fund grant scheme – a Ministerial initiative whose funding became subsumed in the AONB 'single pot' of Defra funding and in most areas since lost to subsequent cuts. We, like some other AONBs, have a Community Officer and support community groups in a variety of ways, as well as a Sustainable Tourism Officer and

associated programme of work. In the past we had probably a higher degree than most AONBs of work with a socio-economic focus – including activity supporting local food and drink, and running the LEADER rural development programme. While this is very positive work, it can generate expectations around the AONB role which can become hard to meet. It can also generate questions e.g. if we oppose planning applications which people feel to have social and economic value, and it can have a direct impact on the amount of work the team can deliver on the primary purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. There is therefore a need for balance, and for adequate resourcing in order to do more.

### **List of Background Papers**

Defra announcement of Review at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-parks-review-launched>.

National Parks 8 Point Plan

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/509916/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509916/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020.pdf)

### **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 in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Glover Review Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 Statutory purposes for AONBs, AONB Conservation Boards and National Parks

Appendix 3 Summary map from Shropshire Hills AONB boundary study 2006

## **Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs): Terms of Reference**

### **Introduction:**

Our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are a great success. England is a more beautiful and more diverse place because previous generations took the care to campaign for their creation.

In 1945, the government set up a committee under Sir Arthur Hobhouse, who recommended that Britain establish national parks to preserve and enhance their natural beauty and provide recreational opportunities for all members of the public. In 1949, the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act established these national parks, which the minister of the day described as “the most exciting Act of the post-war Parliament.” That legislation created a statutory framework for National Parks and AONBs. In brief, National Parks’ purposes are to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks. For AONBs, the primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Now, as the oldest National Park approaches its 70th anniversary, comes a chance to renew this mission.

That is the context in which this Review takes place. It aims not to diminish the character or independence of our designated landscapes, or to impose new burdens on them and the people who live and work in the areas they cover. Instead, its purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist them, and whether definitions and systems - which in many cases date back to their original creation - are still sufficient.

At the outset, it is also important to state one thing the review will not do: propose reductions in either the geographic extent or the protections given to England’s designated landscapes.

### **Some context:**

In January 2018 the Government published a 25-Year Plan for the Environment. It set out an approach to protect landscapes and habitats in England and committed to undertaking a Review National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The publication of these terms of reference to guide that Review is the next step.

### **Scope:**

The Review will consider National Parks and AONBs in England, including the role of these areas in relation to other places designated for environmental purposes. Landscapes in Wales and Scotland are under devolved administrations and therefore do not fall under the scope of this Review.

The Review will respect the cultural and visual heritage of people, farms and businesses in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### **Objectives:**

In the context of meeting both local and national priorities and wider environmental governance, the Review will examine and make recommendations on:

- The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment
- The case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- The financing of National Parks and AONBs
- How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- How well National Parks and AONBs support communities

Expanding on work already underway, the review will also take advice from Natural England on the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

### **Activity:**

The Review will be led by Julian Glover and supported by an experienced advisory group.

The Review will draw on existing evidence and that submitted by interested groups and individuals during the course of the Review. The review team will also visit people and places in a range of designated landscapes.

### **Cross-Government involvement:**

This is a cross-Government Review, with Defra providing the secretariat and appointing a lead to undertake the Review.

Recommendations will be made to the Government. Implementation will be led by the Defra Secretary of State.

### **Expected Timetable:**

The Review will report in 2019 (the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act).

A more detailed timetable will be developed following commencement of the Review.

## **AONB and National Park purposes**

## Purposes of AONB designation

The primary purpose of designation is **to conserve and enhance natural beauty**. (Section 82 Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, as previously in National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949)

Secondary purposes are set out in Countryside Agency guidance of 2001:

*In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.*

*Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.*

## **AONB Conservation Board Board purposes**

There are additional provisions in the legislation regarding the purposes of AONB Conservation Boards:

*Section 87(1) of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 provides that a Conservation Board must have regard to two purposes in exercising their functions.*

One purpose is to **conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB**.

*The other is to increase the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the AONB's special qualities.*

*However, if it appears to the Board that there is a conflict between these two purposes, it is to attach greater weight to conserving and enhancing the AONB.*

*In pursuing its purposes, section 87(2) requires a Board to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the AONB's local communities.*

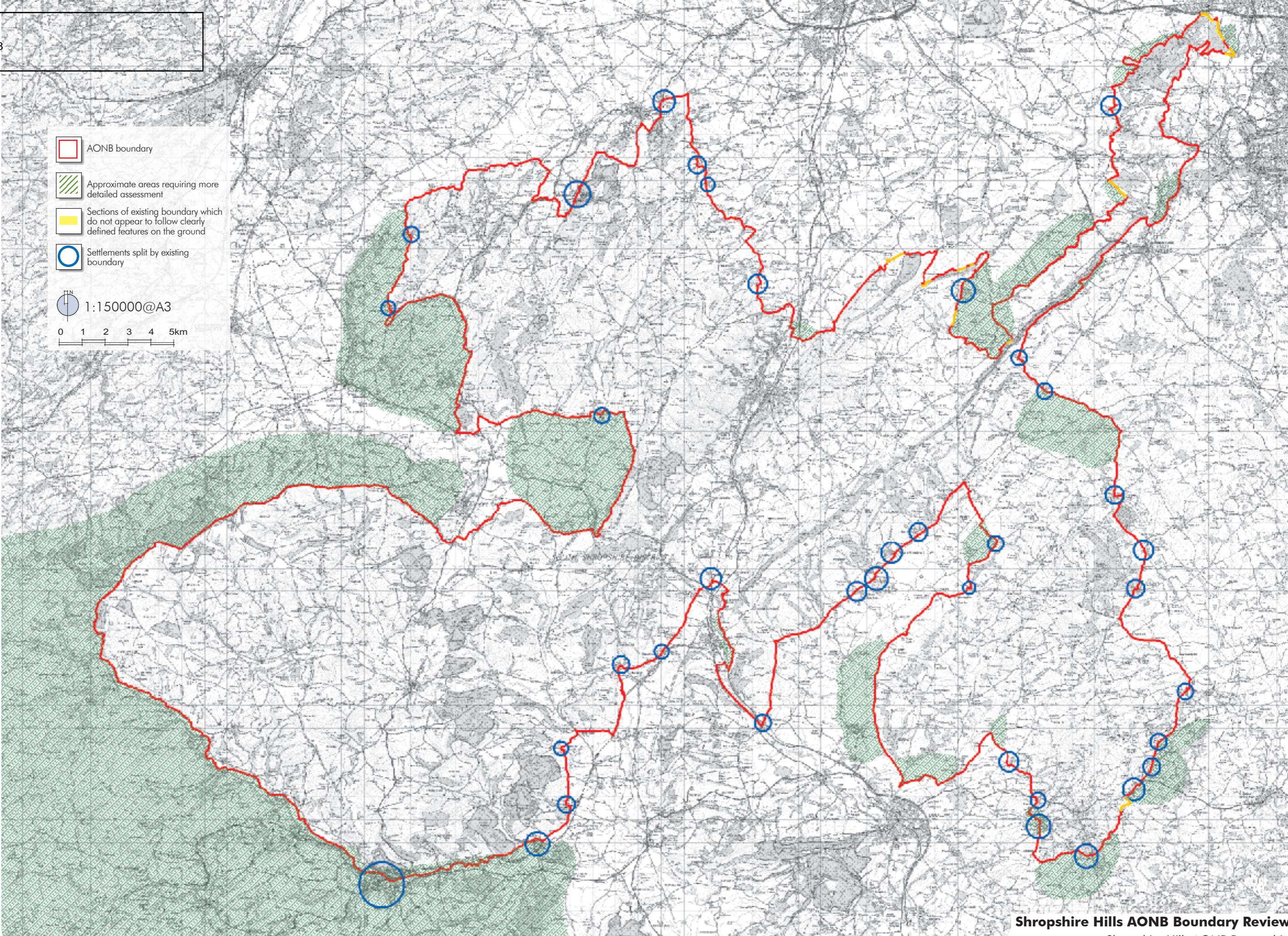
Defra Guidance on Conservation Boards, 2008 (emphasis added)

## National Parks in England and Wales

The Environment Act 1995 revised the original legislation and set out two statutory purposes for National Parks in England and Wales:

1. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
  2. Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public

When National Park authorities carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the Park.

**Shropshire Hills AONB Boundary Review**

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Shropshire Hills AONB Boundary Review

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