



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

Date: Monday, 25 February 2019

**Committee:
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2019

Time: 9.30 am

Venue: Shropshire Room, Craven Arms Community Centre, Newington Way, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9PS

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Members of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

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

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: 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 - 2)

The note of the meeting held on 4 December 2018 is attached for confirmation

3 AONB Management Plan Consultation and Approval (Pages 3 - 8)

This paper summarises the responses to the public consultation on the draft new AONB Management Plan for 2019-24, and sets out the expected timetable for the Plan's approval by the two local authorities.

4 Council Approval of AONB Partnership Terms of Reference

Report to Follow

5 Work Programme Update (Pages 9 - 16)

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

6 Landscape Guidance Contract (Pages 17 - 20)

Consultants are currently developing a guidance document for the AONB based on the Landscape Character Assessment. The purpose and value of this will be explained in this paper and through a brief presentation at the meeting.

7 Julian Glover Visit - Update (Pages 21 - 36)

Julian Glover visited the Shropshire Hills AONB on 17th – 18th January and met a wide variety of people. This paper summarises what happened in the visit and the agenda item provides an opportunity for discussion.

8 Resilient Heritage Capacity Building project - Update (Pages 37 - 38)

This paper updates Partnership members on progress with the capacity building project for the AONB Partnership and Shropshire Hills AONB Trust, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage programme.

9 Date of Next Meeting

Members are asked to note that future meetings of the Partnership will be held on:

Tuesday 11 June 2019 and
Tuesday 8 October 2019



Shropshire Hills
AONB Partnership

5 March 2019

9.30 am

Item

Public

MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2018 9.30 AM - 12.15 PM

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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

Present

Local Authorities

Shropshire Council

Cllr Heather Kidd
Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)
Cllr David Turner

Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Chris Turley

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member

John Long

Individual Member

James Williamson (Chair)

Individual Member

Andrew Wood

Town & Parish Council representative

Hilary Claytonsmith

Town & Parish Council representative

Yvonne Holyoak

Town & Parish Council representative

Mark Hughes

Town & Parish Council representative

Steve Pennington

British Horse Society

Ronald Repath

Butterfly Conservation

Rhona Goddard

Caring for Gods Acre

Gill Binks

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Sarah Bury

CLA

Helen Dale

Land Life & Livelihoods

Joy Greenall

Longmynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

Natural England

Hazel McDowall

SASTAK

David Mills

Shropshire Hills Tourism

Paul Davis

Shropshire Geological Society

David C Smith

Strettons Civic Society

Ian Dormor

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Veronica Cossons

Walford & North Shropshire College

Phil Ridley

Officers

Shropshire Council	Tim Ward (Committee Officer)
Telford & Wrekin Council	Mark Latham (Ecology & Green Infrastructure Specialist)
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Staff Team	Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

40 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

40.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

40.2 Apologies for absence were received from Alison Caffyn (Individual Member), Carol Griffiths (NFU), Joe Manifold (Individual Member), Robert Tindall (Shropshire Council), John Pritchard (Town & Parish Council Rep.) and Martin Pye (Town & Parish Council Rep.).

41 Minutes of the last meeting

41.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2018 had been circulated.

41.2 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2018 be approved as a true record.

41.3 The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that subsequent to the meeting on 23 October, Telford & Wrekin Council's Legal team had raised some issues and queries about the Terms of Reference, and that he was trying to secure a meeting with them and Shropshire Council's Legal team to resolve these.

42 Glover review of National Parks and AONBS - Draft Submission

42.2 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which set out a proposed response to the call for evidence for the Glover Review of designated landscapes.

42.3 Members went through each of the responses and made suggestions for amendments and additional information.

42.4 The AONB Partnership Manager informed members that he would update the response and circulate it to members following submission.

43 Date of Next Meeting

43.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership would be held on Tuesday 5 March 2019 at 9.30am



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 5 th March 2019	<u>Item</u> 3
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AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper summarises the responses to the public consultation on the draft new AONB Management Plan for 2019-24, and sets out the expected timetable for the Plan's approval by the two local authorities.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the issues raised and endorse the draft Plan to go forward for formal approval.

Background

The public consultation ran from 15th November 2018 to 1st February 2019. Relatively few consultation responses were received, partly since all key delivery partners are involved in the Plan preparation through the AONB Partnership. A summary of the consultation comments received and an outline response to these is given in Appendix 1.

Some of the comments conflict with other comments made, or with clear views of the Partnership expressed in preparation of the Plan. In making any amendments, the views of other partners and the prevailing views of the Partnership must be taken into account, since there is no further public consultation on the changes made.

The nature of amendments requested which it is felt can be accommodated without going against the prevailing view are relatively minor, and a revised draft of the full Plan is not therefore included with this paper. An indication of the likely areas of minor changes in wording can be seen in Appendix 1. A revised draft of the Plan showing amendments made can be provided to any Partnership member who wishes. Some further improvements in formatting and presentation will also be made without introducing any substantive changes.

The next stage before going to the Councils for approval is 'formal observations' by Natural England, but their comments on the consultation indicate that this will not raise any issues.

The Management Plan is currently scheduled for approval (along with the revised Partnership Terms of Reference) at Shropshire Council's Cabinet for 10th April 2019. Due to local government elections in Telford & Wrekin Council, the Plan and Terms of Reference will not be able to go to Telford & Wrekin's Cabinet until June. It may be desirable, or necessary, to delay the Shropshire approval further, bringing the two closer into line.

List of Background Papers

Draft Management Plan and supporting documents at
<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/a-special-place/management-plan/>

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 Summary of public consultation comments and response

Shropshire Hills Draft AONB Management Plan 2019-24
Summary of written comments from public consultation and response
Feb 2019

Summary of comments	Summary of response
Individual	
Loophole in planning allowing changing touring and static seasonal use caravan sites into 'park home' developments for permanent residential use, particularly for older people downsizing from 'proper' homes outside the county.	Agreed this can be an issue. The Management Plan cannot change planning policy, but may be able to guide an interpretation that recognises the difference between residential use and genuine tourism developments
Individual	
There are far too many deer. Without effective protection from and control of deer, efforts to encourage more broad-leaved woodland will always be hampered.	More of a problem in some places than others. Plan can give greater recognition to this.
Can a local housing association encourage conversion of large properties into smaller units suitable for and affordable by young families.	Many would agree, but this is unlikely to be an area over which the Management Plan will carry influence
Not enough charging points for electric vehicles.	A strategy has recently been put in place to expand these. This can be mentioned in the Plan
Encourage local retail and catering outlets to participate in the national Refill Scheme which, by providing access to tap water.	A good suggestion and this is now being discussed among tourism bodies
Can something be done about hedgehog decline?	The Plan cannot go into detail about every species that is in decline, but agreed this is a concern and can be mentioned
Individual	
More emphasis on climate change	Climate change is a high level priority in the Plan
Trees should not be planted on other good wildlife habitat	Guidelines for planting in the Plan do say this
Monitoring planning applications is weak – should be make recommendations	Proposal for monitoring is not instead of making responses, but in addition
Disappointed to see 'promote less well known locations in the AONB' for visitors. Want to maintain tranquillity.	There is a need to spread the load, but many places will remain quite and tranquil
Individual	
Botanical diversity on Clee Hill and Catherton Common is suppressed by levels of sheep grazing. Curlews also affected.	These sites are within schemes trying to optimise conservation condition while meeting commoners' needs. The upland commons project 'Our Common Cause' may provide some assistance.
Baseline has shifted in terms of people's perception of normal levels of wildlife	Agreed. The Plan may need to make this clearer.

Summary of comments	Summary of response
Sheep grazing is valuable but better balance is needed. National Park designation would help.	The Management Plan has no direct influence or control on stocking levels. An optimum for delivery of public benefits is supported. The Partnership and Councils have discussed the potential for National Park status and have agreed to wait to see the outcome of the Glover Review.
Church Stretton Town Council	
Plan is very well presented and laid out. Interesting. Text is clearly written. List of contents useful.	Comments appreciated.
Policies related to Local Plan policies	"
Views are described as a 'significant consideration' but could be given greater emphasis by inclusion in a policy	Agreed, this change could be made.
Agricultural workers' dwellings are an exception to normal policy – more could be said on this	Local authority policies make this sufficiently clear
Windfarm policy is sensible but is ref to TAN 8 necessary?	TAN 8 affects developments in Wales which may be very close to the boundary and affect the AONB
Policy P8 should wording be 'guidelines should be followed' rather than 'are recommended'?	Agreed wording is better
Conflict between mountain bikers and walkers – policy EC1 could mention this	Agreed
Natural England	
Welcome thorough approach taken to considering the key issues and needs within the AONB	Comments appreciated
Plan is detailed and provides excellent evidence base and context for policies and actions	"
Welcome Exec Summary and separate policies and actions documents. Area sections are useful.	"
Recommend inclusion of importance of views into the AONB as part of special qualities	Agreed
Policy P1 suggest wording as follows: 'Development in the area around the AONB should be assessed for its impacts on the special qualities of the AONB itself, and also take account of the special qualities and landscape quality of the setting of the AONB'	Agreed
The Habitat Regulations Assessment report received will be considered	Noted

Summary of comments	Summary of response
No comments to make on Strategic Environmental Assessment	Noted
National Farmers Union	
AONBs must take account of people living and working there and address wider economic challenges	The legal requirement is for AONB designation to take this into account, while focussing on the statutory primary purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty
Support for competitiveness – productivity and growth in Plan Vision	Not clear that this relates to delivering conserve and enhance natural beauty
Unhappy with “Not enough progress has been made on water quality and catchment management”	The evidence supports that not enough progress has been made
NELMS – farmers need a voice	Agreed. We will support and encourage full involvement of farmers
Make more of arable and livestock sector in special qualities	Wording will be amended
Unhappy with “worry that major developments are recommended for approval”	This is in line with presumption against major developments in AONBs, Management Plan policies and Partnership positions.
Do not recognise “battling against nature”	On some land considerable effort is required to overcome natural constraints on the land to achieve modest improvements in production, while there are costs to the environment
Repeat that Plan understates arable	Arable is 18% of the AONB
Policy LM1 habitat networks – views of landowners must be integral	Agreed that in many cases support of private landowners is needed, but the policy expresses aspiration
Poultry manure is not classified as waste	If applied at legal levels. Above this it can be. Nitrogen enrichment from poultry is a serious issue
Why is modelling of impacts of poultry not adequate?	This has been found to be the case by EA
Poultry is connected with the landscape	Much less directly than grazing livestock on the land
Policy P5iii Housing. Concern about “housing should be appropriate for needs of agricultural workers and not shortcut to open market”	This is just about meeting requirements of Council policies
Query whether large livestock units would be classified as major development	This is at the discretion of the local authority
Concern that agricultural growth only supported in exceptional circumstances	‘Exceptional circumstances’ applies to major development, not all forms of agricultural growth
Unhappy with being against new buildings where these would exceed size of existing built footprint of farmstead	Planners have encouraged the definition of guidelines in the Management Plan. Policy has been supported by the Partnership
Against restriction of new sheds in open field locations	Open field locations usually have a higher landscape impact

Summary of comments	Summary of response
Impacts on farms from allocation of housing sites should be considered	This is fairly rare, and in such cases the housing site is often being put forward by the farmer as a money making exercise
Concerning that major developments of renewables would be refused	This is national policy
Extension of AONB boundary by 5km is concerning	There is no extension to the boundary
Plan has no action to improve broadband	Does not relate directly to conserving and enhancing natural beauty
Discussions about boundary extension should take place openly and involve wider community	Agreed. Recent discussions have not been initiated or led by the AONB Partnership
Against National Park status	Noted
Has landscape improved to justify National Park status?	Natural beauty criterion is the same for National Parks
Avoid creating over-burdensome requirements on businesses	The AONB Partnership has no regulatory powers, and provides a lot of support to businesses
No mention of litter and fly-tipping	Agreed – this will be added
Keen to assist with development of planning policy	Happy to make links with Council planning policy team



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AONB TEAM WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: 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.

River Clun Recovery Project

Final work is being carried out at the end of this four year WREN-funded project. Over the 4 years, the majority of the project targets have been met or exceeded:

Riparian habitat creation / restoration - 12,000m. Includes alder coppicing, willow pollarding, fencing

Live willow/soft revetment - 225m across 9 holdings

In-channel habitat creation / restoration - 2 Recovery Sites

Woodland creation (planted by contractors & volunteers) - 4,574 trees, 5,178m of riparian woodland creation / restoration covering 3.39ha

Woodland creation (Woodland Trust funded) – 8,756 trees, 11,696m of riparian woodland creation / restoration covering 5.32 ha

Sustainable watering systems for livestock – 11 systems supplied / installed

Farm track restored / upgraded - 1,100m across 5 holdings

Gateways upgraded - 12

Sediment traps / Attenuation measures – 7 over 4 holdings

Watercourse crossing structures to replace/upgrade fords – 14 over 4 holdings

Through the Environment Agency's 'Unmuddying the Waters' fund, we have facilitated and managed projects over 3 years:

Large scale watercourse fencing & solar pump kits installed 5 sites

Small scale watercourse fencing & solar pump kits installed	3 sites
Farm track restored / upgraded	390m
Gateways upgraded	2
Watercourse crossing structures to replace/upgrade fords	2

A total of 39 holdings have been worked with on these two combined projects.

Further funding is available through Environment Agency's 'Unmuddying the Waters' project and from Woodland Trust, and work in the Clun catchment will continue for a further two years.

Water Environment Grant: Teme – Onny – Clun project

This new project in partnership with Severn Rivers Trust funded by the Environment Agency/ Natural England 'Water Environment Grant' is to provide capacity for improved advice to farmers regarding the water environment. This has just been confirmed, and formal agreements are to be drawn up (this project is not yet included in the budget appended).

Sustainable tourism delivery

The Shropshire Hills Shuttle Bus service will run from the 4th May until the end of September. This year it will also be running into Picklescott twice a day in order to service the pub and many accommodation businesses in the village. This is as a result of discussions with the Picklescott community. National Trust funding of an additional £1,000 towards running the buses is much appreciated. We are hoping that the subscribers scheme that we ran very successfully last year will continue to be popular, but will need to look for additional funding options if we wish to continue the service for 2020.

The Shropshire Hills Tourism Expo will be held at Ludlow Racecourse this year on April 3rd. The Expo is being jointly run by the AONB Partnership and Shropshire Hills Tourism who are funding the venue. A morning of tourism business talks, support, leaflet exchanging and promotion will be followed by a sit down conference in the afternoon, with speakers including Carol Ritchie, Chief Executive of the Europarc Federation, Shane Harris from North Pennines AONB, Tish Dockerty from Local to Ludlow and Cllr Lezley Picton, Portfolio holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism. All Partnership members are welcome to come, please email alison.kay@shropshire.gov.uk to book your place.

The year we are launching the Great Shropshire Hills Cream Tea Trail in partnership with Shropshire Hills Tourism. The Trail will encourage visitors to explore the destination more widely, spreading the economic benefit and promoting some of our must see places. Local businesses will promote the Shropshire Cream Tea, linking locally distinctive food and skills to what will be a very enjoyable trail experience, and visitors will be able to score their favourite cream teas. The winning venue will be announced at the Ludlow Food Festival in September. The Trail is being sponsored by The Ludlow Farm Shop and funded by Shropshire Hills Tourism and will be launched at the Tourism Expo.

Fix the Fort - The fundraising to repair the ramparts of Caer Caradoc has got off to a reasonable start, raising over £800 in a few months. In addition to funds, we have also raised interest from local people wishing to take part in the restoration work. The fundraising also

being supported by the Church Stretton Walking Festival who are donating the money raised for their Fix the Fort walk, which is part of this year's walk programme.

'Our Common Cause' Upland Commons project

Collective visions are being developed with key stakeholders at the three commons involved in the project in our area – Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty.

The Delivery Phase application is to go in by end of October and good progress is being made with assembling match funding.

Stepping Stones project – the National Trust are continuing to develop this major long term initiative. The proposed test for the new Environment Land Management System has been accepted by Defra to go ahead, and will focus on farmer engagement and whole farm plans. A Defra team visited recently to discuss this.

Project development

The 'Trees Outside Woods' proposed project is still in discussion with Woodland Trust and an Expression of Interest is to be submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (what used to be the Heritage Lottery Fund). This project will integrate with the proposals for enhancing habitat networks in the Upper Teme.

Preparations are being made to submit funding bids for the Monument Volunteers project.

The Marches Crayfish project continuing into a new phase in 2019, and funding has been pledged by Natural England.

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

The Public consultation has been completed and responses analysed. A meeting is scheduled with NFU representatives to discuss their detailed comments.

The Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening report has been completed.

Local authority liaison

Following the Julian Glover visit, a meeting was held with Shropshire Council for the Chair and Partnership Manager with Cllrs Peter Nutting and Lezley Picton, Clive Wright and Mark Barrow, along with Howard Davies from NAAONB. This is being followed up with a visit by Clive and Mark to see work of the team.

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

Conservation Fund 2018-19 claims are being processed and applications received for 2019-20 grants.

Planning

A response was made to Shropshire Council's Preferred Sites consultation regarding Church Stretton proposed housing sites.

Local partnership working

Meetings have been held of the Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership.
Ongoing meetings with River Clun and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Steering Group.

Communications & public awareness

The 'Great Days in the Shropshire Hills' leaflet for 2019 has been published.
Work has started on the new AONB website which we are planning to launch this summer.
The AONB currently enjoys 3,662 followers on Twitter and 2,410 likes and 2,433 followers on Facebook. Both platforms show gradual but consistent growth in engagement.

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 has also been given to Bishop's Castle and Church Stretton Walking Festivals.
We are starting to host a post-graduate internship working on the Upper Clun catchment.

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

Structure and governance

Refinements have been made to the redrafted Terms of Reference to satisfy the local authorities' Legal Departments.

Glover Review of AONBs and National Parks – written evidence was submitted in December and Julian Glover visited the Shropshire Hills on 17-18th January.

The Management Board met on 21st Jan – the agenda comprised the AONB Team work programme update, Management Plan consultation, Terms of Reference update, Glover Review, AONB Partnership budgets update, new project development and Business Plan workshop.

Resilient Heritage project

A facilitated Business Planning workshop involving the Management Board and team was held on 30th January.

A theme and location needs to be chosen for the Partnership tour on 19th June.

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

Appendix 1 AONB Partnership 2019 – 20 budget as bid to Defra

Appendix 2 AONB Partnership team work programme summary

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Budget 2019-20

<u>Expenditure</u>	2019-20	<u>Income</u>	2019-20	
	outline budget		outline budget	%
Staff costs (inclusive of NI, pension, training, T&S)	£229,985	Defra AONB Single Pot	£196,202	63.4%
Salary	£168,738	Shropshire Council	£56,830	18.4%
NI	£17,408	Telford & Wrekin Council	£2,694	0.9%
Superannuation	£25,079	Heritage Lottery Fund (Resilient Heritage)	£19,050	6.2%
Pension lump sum	£16,060	Earned income required into core	£34,804	11.2%
Travel & Subsistence	£1,650			
Training	£1,050			
Office costs	£25,830			
Rent (including broadband & communal services)	£11,050			
Rates	£5,300			
Electricity	£780			
Waste collection & cleaning materials	£900			
Office equipment & maintenance	£500			
Printing & stationery	£1,500			
Postage, phone & mobiles	£1,400			
Office vehicle	£4,400			
Support services	£31,290			
Promotional Activity	£660			
Website hosting and development	£240			
Other promotion	£240			
Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB	£180			
Partnership running costs	£4,150			
AONB Partnership and sub-groups	£1,200			
Subscriptions (NAAONB, Europarc Federation, etc)	£2,950			
Strategic & development work	£3,000			
Development work	£1,000			
Landscape guidance consultancy contract	£2,000			
Resilient Heritage project (non staff costs)	£14,665			
Expert advice contracts	£8,190			
Training for staff & volunteers	£1,475			
Expenses for volunteer Friends recruiters	£400			
Publicity & promotion materials	£2,500			
Evaluation	£1,100			
Contingency	£1,000			
CORE TOTAL	£309,580	CORE TOTAL	£309,580	
RIVERS		RIVERS		
Staff costs (inclusive of NI, pension, training, T&S)	£30,673	Environment Agency	£33,000	
Habitat enhancement works	£15,000	Woodland Trust	£5,000	
Freshwater Crayfish project	£3,000	AONB Partnership cash match funding	£7,673	
Total	£48,673	Income for crayfish project	£3,000	
SHUTTLES		SHUTTLES		
Long Mynd & Stiperstones service operating costs	£30,456	Ticket Income	£3,900	
Leaflet for next season	£800	Concessionary fare compensation	£3,600	
Miscellaneous running costs		Shropshire Council contribution	£7,500	
		National Trust	£6,000	
		Additional income target	£500	
		Brought forward from reserves	£8,506	
		Passenger donations	£1,250	
Total	£31,256		£31,256	
GRAND TOTAL	£389,509	GRAND TOTAL	£389,509	

Area of work	Key actions and targets
TAKING ACTION - on the ground and in our communities - to conserve and enhance natural beauty and to promote enjoyment and understanding.	
River Clun Catchment Project	Begin new phase of Clun Catchment work with funding from Environment Agency and Woodland Trust
'Our Common Cause' Upland Commons project	Support Foundation for Common Land to complete development phase and submit Phase 2 application, by providing office space for Project Manager, convening Area Group, and providing Area Facilitation role.
Sustainable Tourism delivery	Manage 2019 Long Mynd – Stiperstones Shuttles bus service & plan 2020. Develop the ' Caering for Caradoc – Fix the Fort ' appeal.
Develop Young People's project	Including John Muir Award, Young Rangers and Traineeship scheme.
Develop a Monument Volunteers project	Support local people to survey and care for heritage sites at risk.
Develop other new projects	Potentially including Road verges, cross-border habitat networks in the Upper Teme, and National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.
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 review	Complete formal approval and dissemination of the Management Plan. Continue delivery priorities for team and key partners. Engage people especially on upland farming and post-Brexit land management support.
Water Environment Grant	Deliver farm advice in partnership with Severn Rivers Trust (subject to contract)
AONB Trust	Work closely with the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust to develop fund-raising.
Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund	Support the AONB Trust to implement the fund through grants, and provide advice and support for projects.
Friends of Shropshire Hills AONB	Increase membership of Friends, working with the AONB Trust.
Planning	Comment on relevant LDF documents and key planning applications. Maintain and improve links with local authority planning staff and members.
Local partnership working	Continue to lead Clun Catchment Partnership , input to Teme Partnership & Clun steering groups and support catchment management delivery. Support operation of the Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership . Support delivery of new Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy . Support development of ' Stepping Stones ' project led by National Trust. Operate and support local partnership structures including Wrekin Forest .
Input to other strategies & schemes	Provide input to at least 4 strategic consultations (non-planning). Comment on non-planning casework such as EIAs, watercourses and hedges.
Communications & public awareness	Update website and use social media . Publish 4 Enewsletters and Annual Review , give 10 talks .
Local authorities and Partnerships	Maintain links with relevant departments of each local authority. Input to Local Nature Partnership and other groups.
Evidence base	Collate data as part of Management Plan monitoring framework.
Guidance & strategy	Complete Landscape Guidance and develop guidance on AONB website.
Support initiatives led by others	Support at least 15 projects and respond to requests for information.
Support for groups	Support 30 community groups in total (includes through activities above).
MANAGING OUR BUSINESS - develop a robust, effective and financially sustainable AONB organisation.	
Hosting and governance	Work with Shropshire Council to develop hosting relationship, and reconsider Conservation Board when Glover Review recommendations are known.
Resilient Heritage (HLF)	Implement capacity building project with AONB Trust, including Business Plans, communications and engagement, and income generation.
AONB Partnership	Involve members and support & develop the Partnership structure.
AONB Team	Hold monthly team meetings, complete performance reviews and training.
National Association for AONBs	Active involvement with NAAONB and other relevant networks.
Volunteering	Involve 300 volunteers through AONB-led and supported activities.

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<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 5 th March 2019	<u>Item</u> 6
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LANDSCAPE GUIDANCE CONTRACT

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
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Summary

Consultants are currently developing a guidance document for the AONB based on the Landscape Character Assessment. The purpose and value of this will be explained in this paper and through a brief presentation at the meeting.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the issues raised.

Background

The Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment was developed in the early 2000s and published as a description of 27 'Landscape Types' across the county, of which 16 are found in the AONB. This is useful and still valid, but the further development of the assessment to analyse forces for change in the different landscape types and recommended guidance for conserving and enhancing their character and quality, has never been done. In some other AONBs and areas of the country this guidance stage has been developed, and has proved useful to inform both planning casework and land management. The proposal to develop guidance now for the AONB arose from improved contact and dialogue with Shropshire Council's Development Management team during 2018.

In December a contract for £10,000 to develop the guidance was let to Countryside working with Fiona Fyfe Associates, both of whom have a very good track record in this area of work. Map-based data and background material is now being analysed and the consultants carried out two days of fieldwork in January with members of the AONB team visiting all the landscape types and major areas of the AONB. A stakeholder workshop will be held on 14th March for interested partner organisations to hear about the project and discuss the early draft contents of the guidance. The input of partner organisations will be important in fine-tuning the guidance content. After this workshop it is expected to carry out a formal process of public consultation, in order that the guidance can carry as much weight as possible in the planning system.

The main outcome of the contract will be an electronic guidance document, but it is hoped also to extend the contract to enable the guidance material to be reached through web-based interactive mapping.

Some slides showing similar guidance materials from elsewhere will be shown at the meeting.

List of Background Papers

Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment is described at <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/landscape/shropshire-landscape-assessment/>, and the pdf of the Landscape Typology document and an interactive map are available.

Example of landscape guidance from Exmoor http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/996182/LCA-2018-LCT-D.pdf. The actual guidance content relating to planning and land management is in the last few pages of this document.

Example of interactive mapping for landscape guidance <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/managing-the-aonb/guidance-documents/landscape-strategy-map/>

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

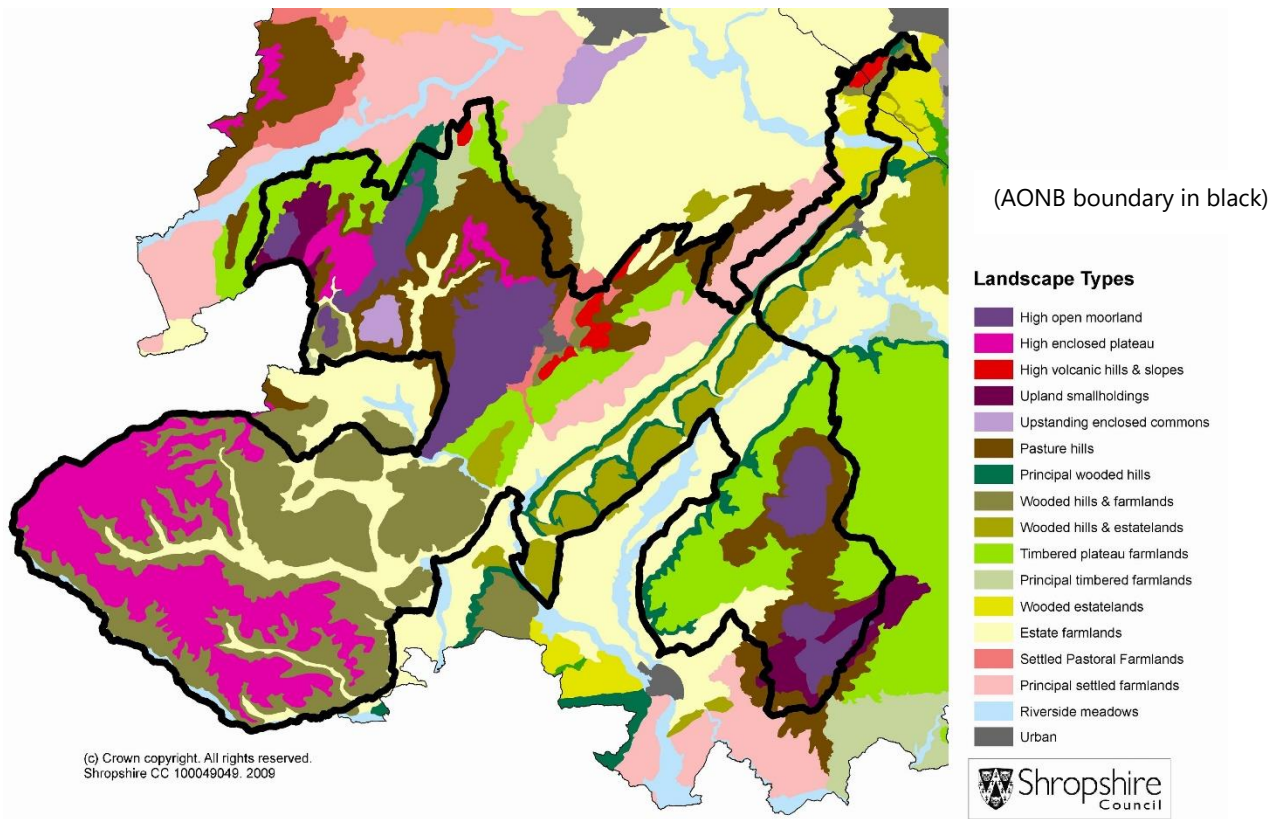
The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Landscape Types

Shropshire Hills AONB Landscape Types

Of the 27 landscape types in the county, 16 are found in the AONB, as below.



Grouping	Landscape Types	Found in the AONB at
Upland landscape types	High Open Moorland	Long Mynd, Stiperstones, Clee Hills
	High Enclosed Plateau	Clun Forest, Shelve
	Volcanic Hills and Slopes	Stretton Hills, The Wrekin
	Upland Smallholdings	around Clee Hill and Stapeley Hill
	Upstanding Enclosed Commons	Norbury Hill
Intermediate landscape types	Pasture Hills	Upper Onny, Clee Hills
	Principal Wooded Hills	Wenlock Edge, fringe of Clee plateau, Eastridge
	Wooded Hills and Farmlands	Clun & Teme catchments
	Wooded Hills and Estatelands	SE dip slope of Wenlock Edge
	Timbered Plateau Farmlands	Clee plateau, fringes of Stretton & Rea valleys
Lowland landscape types	Principal Timbered Farmlands	Haberley area
	Wooded Estatelands	Leighton, Sheinton, Buildwas
	Estate Farmlands	Corve Dale, Ape Dale
	Settled Pastoral Farmlands	Stretton Valley
	Principal Settled Farmlands	Ape Dale, Longnor
	Riverside Meadows	Teme, Clun, Onny and Corve
	Urban	Church Stretton

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<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 5 th March 2019	<u>Item</u> 7
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JULIAN GLOVER VISIT - UPDATE

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
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Summary

Julian Glover visited the Shropshire Hills AONB on 17th – 18th January and met a wide variety of people. This paper summarises what happened in the visit and the agenda item provides an opportunity for discussion.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the issues raised.

Background

The Glover Review published its terms of reference and started work in June 2018, and invited written evidence from October to December 2018. The AONB Partnership's written evidence was submitted and circulated to members on 14th December after a valuable additional Partnership meeting on 4th December to discuss a draft of the evidence (see link below). Around 2,500 written submissions of evidence were made.

Julian Glover visited the Shropshire Hills AONB on 17th – 18th January 2019, accompanied by Louise Leighton-McTague, Head of the Glover Review Secretariat team at Defra. The steer was that Julian wished to meet a range of people involved with the AONB and hear a range of views and perspectives. Partnership members were invited to participate and those who expressed an interest were included. The programme for the visit is at Appendix 1. The Review Panel between them are visiting all AONBs and National Parks.

Expectations of the visit ran high, and throughout the visit Julian was keen to keep discussion moving around different topics. This is in line with the remit of the Review to look at the national system of designated landscapes, informed by local experience in particular areas, but not reviewing or making recommendations on each designated area individually. The first quite large meeting was held partly to discuss the potential for boundary extension of the AONB into Herefordshire and/or Powys, and the potential for National Park status. A discussion of this sort involving representatives of Herefordshire and Powys is not believed to have happened before, and a brief note of the meeting is at Appendix 2 for the record.

The second meeting at the AONB Partnership office later on 17th January was intended to focus particularly on points raised in our evidence about our Conservation Board proposal and the local authority hosting model, but ended up being a more general discussion about activity of the AONB Partnership and team.

The six visits on 18th January went very well despite some snow, with a variety of people involved including farmers, Norbury Primary School, delivery partners and staff from the AONB team.

Around 50 people were involved in the two day visit in total. The final visit at Ironbridge enabled some further new contacts to be made and another useful discussion – about the links between the AONB and Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site and its management structures.

Julian and the Defra team expressed thanks to all those involved in the visit. The Panel is due to report in the autumn of 2019.

The issues of potential boundary extension and National Park status have attracted some press and public attention. The AONB Partnership itself has not initiated discussions on these topics but clearly must be involved and engaged in such discussions if they take place. Contrary to some expectations, the Glover Review is not understood to be likely to make any specific recommendations on these matters regarding particular AONBs. It is however likely that more general recommendations made by the Review, e.g. about the process of making boundary changes or new designations, may have some implications for these issues in relation to the Shropshire Hills.

It is suggested that the positions of the Partnership as recently set out on these two topics remain valid at the current time -

On potential boundary changes (as in the draft Management Plan November 2018):

Policy B1 - The AONB boundary

At the current time, the benefits of formally amending the AONB boundary would not be justified against the considerable costs and resources this would entail. The AONB Partnership and local authorities will work, and encourage partners and others to work, in ways which strengthen the integrity and identity of the Shropshire Hills AONB as an area of exceptional landscape value. The Partnership will focus its work strongly on the designated AONB area, but will work in a flexible and pragmatic way in relation to the boundary to secure the maximum benefit for the Shropshire Hills. If the process for amending boundaries is made easier, this policy will be reviewed.

On potential for National Park status (as in our Glover Review evidence December 2018):

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership retains its ambition to achieve a stronger governance structure, as expressed in our bid for a Conservation Board. We would wish to consider the options for designation and governance in more detail after understanding the recommendations of the Glover review and the government's response.

The written submission of evidence of Natural England is included here as Appendix 3, and that of the National Association for AONBs is available at the link below for members who may be interested to see these. The NAAONB response is understood to have been well received by the Review team as ambitious and informative. Natural England's position that the Conservation Board model should be made available to those AONB Partnerships who wish to use it, is of interest.

List of Background Papers

AONB Partnership written evidence to the Glover review and back ground information available at <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/aonb-partnership/aonb-partnershipglover-review-of-designated-landscapes/>

NAAONB written submission to the Glover Review available at <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/NAAONB-Response-to-Glover-Review-of-Designated-Landscapes.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 Julian Glover visit to Shropshire Hills AONB 17-18th January 2019 - programme

Appendix 2 Note of meeting held 17/1/19 discussing potential boundary extension

Appendix 3 Natural England written submission to the Glover Review

Shropshire Hills AONB – Julian Glover visit 17th- 18th January 2019 Itinerary

When	Where	Who	What
Thursday 3.20pm – 4.45pm	Craven Arms Community Centre (room booked)	Philip Dunne MP for Ludlow James Williamson AONB Partnership Chair Cllr Cecilia Motley AONB Partnership Vice Chair & Shropshire Council Hilary Clayton-Smith AONB Partnership Vice Chair Cllr Robert Tindall AONB Partnership (Shropshire Council) Veronica Cossons Shropshire Wildlife Trust and AONB Partnership Colin Preston, Shropshire Wildlife Trust CEO Cllr Andy Boddington, Shropshire Council Steve Brown and Clare Fildes, Shropshire Council Gavin Ashford and Mark Latham, Telford & Wrekin Council Sarah Bury, Shropshire CPRE & AONB Partnership Carol Griffiths, NFU and AONB Partnership Roger Plowden, CLA Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager Joy Howells, AONB Funding & Programmes Officer Cllr Carole Gandy & Juliet Wheatley, Herefordshire Council Adrian Humpage, Powys County Council Lorne Campbell, Forestry Commission	Discussion on potential expansion of the AONB, or potential National Park designation - chaired by Philip Dunne Wildlife Trusts 'Wild Marches' proposal for extended designation. Landscape value of adjacent land in Herefordshire and Wales.
5.00pm – 6.00pm	AONB office at Drovers House, Craven Arms	James Williamson, Cllr Cecilia Motley, Hilary Clayton-Smith, Cllr David Turner (all AONB Partnership). Philip Dunne MP Phil Holden, Joy Howells, Mike Kelly - AONB team Steve Brown and Clare Fildes – Shropshire Council	AONB Partnership group and structure Council hosting, Conservation Board proposal Resourcing and operation. Influence in planning.

FRIDAY			
8.15am – 9.45am	River Clun – Beambridge (arrive at site 8.25 am)	Phil Holden (all day – except NFU and CLA sessions) Mike Kelly AONB Natural Environment Officer Alison Jones AONB Clun Catchment Officer Gill Walters, Environment Agency Emma Johnson, Natural England Joy Greenall, Land Life & Livelihoods group Jim Whitehead, Lawn Farm Mark Chandler, Heath House Farm	River Clun Recovery project. Longstanding habitat management work on river with SAC protected site, partnership working with EA, NE and Woodland Trust. Ecosystem services and integrated catchment management. Working with community and farmers, Community Wildlife Group, Stewardship Facilitation Fund. Agri-environment schemes and transition
9.45am – 10.35am	Cwm Bydd Farm, Clunton	Carol Griffiths (NFU Clun Valley Branch Chairman and AONB Partnership member) and local NFU members	NFU farmers' views on issues facing the area
11.00am - 11.50am	Plowden Hall	Roger Plowden and Andrew Sayer, CLA members. Helen Dale, Regional Adviser CLA James Williamson, AONB Partnership Chair Cllr Cecilia Motley, AONB Partnership Vice Chair	CLA members' views on issues facing the area
12.00pm – 12.45pm	Norbury Village Hall (lunch)	Les Ball Head of Norbury Primary School & Year 6 pupils Cath Landles, AONB Community & Landscape Officer	John Muir Award and educational work The school run 'Brew with a View' café at the village hall on Friday
12.45pm – 1.15pm	Long Mynd (en route – weather dependent)	Andrew Hearle, National Trust Joy Howells, AONB team	Stepping Stones landscape-scale project. Biodiversity, links with NNRs, SSSIs. NELMS Trial proposal. Landscape Partnership Scheme
1.15pm – 2.15pm	Church Stretton Burway Road and walk down into Cardingmill Valley	James Williamson, AONB Partnership Chair Nigel McDonald, AONB Sustainable Tourism Officer Stephanie Hayes, AONB Promotions Officer Anthony Morgan AONB Trust Chairman Alison Caffyn, AONB Partnership member Pete Carty & Andrew Hearle, National Trust Hilary Claytonsmith Church Stretton Town Council & AONB Partnership Vice Chair (unable to attend)	Planning pressures - housing. Sustainable tourism – Shuttles, Destination Partnership, Charter, promotion, recreation pressures, Fix the Fort appeal for Caer Caradoc. Joint working with AONB Trust. Friends scheme. Conservation Fund projects.
2.15pm – 3.00pm	Ape Dale and Wenlock Edge (en route)	Mike Kelly AONB team Alison Caffyn AONB Partnership	Planning pressures – large agricultural & renewable energy developments. AONB boundary issues.
3.00pm-3.30pm	Ironbridge	Cllr Rae Evans, Cllr Nicola Lowery & Mark Latham Telford & Wrekin Council Sir Neil Cossons, Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site	Wrekin area of AONB, links with Telford, Ironbridge. Conservation, sustainable tourism, social inclusion

Note of meeting 17th January 2019

The meeting was held at Craven Arms Community Centre as part of Julian Glover's visit to the Shropshire Hills AONB on 17-18th January as part of the national Glover Review of designated landscapes. The meeting was held at the request of Philip Dunne, MP to discuss the Review, as well as the potential for extending the AONB boundary into Herefordshire and/or Powys, and the possibility of National Park status.

Present:

Julian Glover
 Philip Dunne MP for Ludlow
 James Williamson AONB Partnership Chair
 Cllr Cecilia Motley AONB Partnership Vice Chair & Shropshire Council
 Hilary Claytonsmith AONB Partnership Vice Chair
 Cllr Robert Tindall Shropshire Council & AONB Partnership
 Veronica Cossons Shropshire Wildlife Trust and AONB Partnership
 Colin Preston, Shropshire Wildlife Trust CEO
 Cllr Andy Boddington, Shropshire Council
 Steve Brown, Shropshire Council
 Clare Fildes, Shropshire Council
 Gavin Ashford, Telford & Wrekin Council
 Mark Latham, Telford & Wrekin Council
 Sarah Bury, Shropshire CPRE & AONB Partnership
 Carol Griffiths, NFU and AONB Partnership
 Roger Plowden, CLA
 Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
 Joy Howells, AONB Funding & Programmes Officer
 Cllr Carole Gandy, Herefordshire Council
 Juliet Wheatley, Herefordshire Council
 Adrian Humpage, Powys County Council
 Lorne Campbell, Forestry Commission

Julian invited all present to introduce themselves, and some expressed views on the potential for boundary extension and/or National Park status. Current activity and operation under the existing AONB designation was also discussed.

Philip Dunne said this AONB was not well resourced by its local authorities and felt that more could be done to promote the AONB and nearby areas for tourism.

Cecilia Motley said the structure and relationship with the planning authority was an issue, as comments were not given much weight since the AONB Partnership was not a statutory consultee. She didn't have strong views about the boundary but was not keen on becoming a National Park and referred to fears of people working in the area about restrictions.

Carol Griffiths said farmers were concerned about further restrictions. She said replacement farm buildings were needed and additional powers would be worrying.

Lorne Campbell said the Mortimer Forest crosses the Shropshire/Herefordshire border and the AONB objectives to conserve and enhance the landscape and make the most of recreation opportunities fitted well with Forestry Commission's aims for the forest.

James Williamson said he felt AONB designation was more appropriate to the area than National Park.

Cllr Carole Gandy as the ward member for the Mortimer area of Herefordshire said it seemed the AONB has relatively little influence in planning. She said tourism was important but North Herefordshire is a tranquil area and there was a risk of that becoming different. Designation might drive better quality housing but this would be more expensive. She noted that the Welsh system was significantly devolved now.

Clare Fildes felt there was potential for the AONB to have more impact within the county.

Cllr Robert Tindall felt the area shouldn't be a National Park but the AONB's remit should be strengthened, including being a statutory consultee on planning and revisiting the boundary.

Colin Preston mentioned environmental pressures including housing and industrial agricultural developments. He said there was an opportunity to look at the natural capital of farmland, and said that the boundaries of the AONB do not make much sense.

Veronica Cossons said that natural beauty included biodiversity and landscape and heritage, and needed protecting more.

Cllr Andy Boddington said that from leading a discussion on potential for National Park status he could see that while some of the public are in favour, many farmers are very nervous about the idea. He felt the stronger identity and planning powers would be an advantage. The weakness of the current system to deal with planning pressures was a problem. He would like to see a National Park or a strengthened AONB, and suggested inclusion of Ironbridge and Mortimer Forest.

Roger Plowden was concerned about the idea of a National Park and said landowners often have to deal with the consequences of access without help. He felt better infrastructure was needed, in particular we need to look at car parking, litter, dog control and education. Landowners should be supported to do their job of looking after the countryside.

Juliet Wheatley said that landscape and biodiversity don't stop at administrative boundaries. She was aware however that resources for new designations were minimal and resources of the additional local authorities which might be included was also an issue.

Mark Latham said that a small but important part of the AONB was within Telford & Wrekin, and there was a lot of growth and development around it. Social inclusion along with health and wellbeing were therefore a high priority.

Gavin Ashford said that the designated areas were important to Telford.

Adrian Humpage said the Powys Local Development Plan had been adopted and had taken a policy approach to landscape protection rather than area designations. The potential for AONB designation near the English border had never been mentioned through the LDP examination process, though there was interest further west in Powys from campaign groups in relation to the Cambrian Mountains area. The recent Welsh review of designated landscapes had also not brought out any interest regarding the border area. For Natural Resources Wales to take forward a designation proposal and local authority involvement would require resources and political support and would need a strong evidence base and justification. Maintaining the existing designations was already difficult and new ones would spread resources even more thinly.

Philip Dunne mentioned the Agriculture Bill and new funding regimes, in which he expected designated landscape organisations to have a role. The Environment Bill would bring new

powers, but he recognised that capacity was an issue both for planning authorities and the AONB Partnership.

Robert Tindall felt that if the AONB body were a statutory consultee it should be a Conservation Board and better resourced. He was keen to see the AONB enlarged and felt that the Powys landscape was little different. The Midlands area of the UK was under-represented by designated landscapes.

Julian Glover said he was looking for big ambition, above process and detail. He said how money goes into the landscape was changing and the role for designated landscapes was interesting. Money for farming wouldn't be guaranteed and a new effort was needed to make the case to the Treasury. He said there was a need to think about nature differently, not to hector people and to build coalitions. He described joining things up, as in the Lawton report recommendations. His Review would not be looking at boundary changes individually and was also not covering Wales. He felt boundaries were always a bit arbitrary but the process could be simpler. He was also interested in how people outside designated landscapes get benefits from them, keeping in mind the founding vision, that these are areas for everyone. He asked how the Partnership works in practice.

Sarah Bury said it worked well on the ground but had poor resources. She felt AONBs were more creative, and National Parks by comparison rather bureaucratic.

Cecilia Motley said the relationship between Shropshire Council and the AONB had been difficult. The authority had been under pressure and the AONB had suffered. Work on the Conservation Board proposal had been very positive and this would offer more freedom to raise resource and expand areas of activity. It shouldn't however sever all contact with the local authority, who were now more receptive. Though the Conservation Board proposal had been stalled, we were moving forward.

Colin Preston said we were in danger of not delivering the Lawton vision and of designated areas not being fit or adequate for their purpose.

Veronica Cossons said a lot of effort went into preparing the Management Plan but questioned whether it has sufficient teeth.

Clare Fildes mentioned work of health and wellbeing.

Hilary Clayton-Smith said the recently proposed housing sites in Church Stretton, the only town in the AONB, were problematic and there was a risk of important areas of the AONB being built over.

There was further discussion about natural beauty and use by people of the area for recreation.

The meeting was not intended to seek any decisions, and no firm conclusions were reached. People expressed however that it had been a valuable discussion which had not happened before with the parties present.

Natural England's Response to the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes

1. Natural England's Role

1.1 Natural England is a statutory body established under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the "NERC Act"). We are the statutory adviser to Government on the natural environment. Our purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. As the national landscape adviser for England, Natural England is the designating authority for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We have specific powers and duties to advise on the management and governance of designated landscapes and to monitor and assess their effectiveness. We are a statutory consultee on planning matters and provide landscape advice to local planning authorities and the Secretary of State. This response draws on our significant experience and expertise from working closely with designated landscape partners in these roles over many years.

2. What this Review can achieve

2.1 We believe that this review offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to place designated landscapes at the heart of Government's wider 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) ambitions. Covering 24% of England, the 10 National Parks and 34 AONBs are our finest landscapes, rich in natural beauty, their distinctive character providing a wide range of benefits to local communities and visitors. As environmentally focused bodies, they already perform valuable functions in conserving natural beauty, the natural environment and natural capital, but they could do much more. This review should retain and build on designated landscapes' existing purposes, founded on conserving and enhancing their natural beauty, but we would like to see them deliver much more towards the Government's goals of environmental improvement and delivering more ambitious benefits for people and the economy.

2.2 Landscapes define the character of our country, creating a sense of place and belonging. Well-managed landscapes support thriving wildlife, nourish our culture and underpin a sustainable economy. As our most cherished landscapes, National Parks and AONBs have the capacity to provide nationally important benefits and enhance our natural capital into the future. Designated landscapes can offer more than their current contribution. They should exemplify integrated, landscape-scale approaches to management that improve their natural capital assets for people in and beyond their boundaries. They should adopt a more coherent national voice as a key part of the Defra family to deliver more with their resources for a healthier natural world. Designated landscapes can play a major role in delivering the 25 YEP by well targeted and informed management and action, for example, as a key part of the Nature Recovery Network, piloting environmental net gain, delivering carbon sequestration, piloting the new Environmental Land Management System (ELM) and forging green connections with urban populations.

2.3 Natural England can play a significant role in helping designated landscapes achieve these ambitious changes, reinforcing our statutory links and supporting and championing the designated landscape family.

3. Summary of Natural England's overarching recommendations

3.1 Our overarching recommendations are set out below. These are supported by further analysis, including how Natural England may support their delivery, which we would be pleased to discuss with the Review team.

- I) **Stronger Together:** Greater collaboration and coordination across designated landscapes, working to a common set of national objectives, standards and performance criteria whilst reflecting local priorities.
- II) **Champions for the environment:** Designated landscapes should be exemplars of the enhancement of natural beauty and natural capital, delivering specific contributions to the 25 Year Environment Plan goals and sustainably providing thriving wildlife, multiple ecosystem services, health and well-being benefits into the future.
- III) **Making the most of the best:** New designations and boundary variations to be undertaken where they add substantial national value to the current series. The current designation process should be simplified.
- IV) **More effective land use planning:** Strengthening the ability of designated landscapes, particularly AONB partnerships, to enhance their character and natural beauty and deliver environmental improvement through the quality and consistency of land use planning and related decisions.
- V) **For people, with people:** Designated landscapes to pioneer new ways to connect more people from all parts of society with the natural environment, to raise awareness of, increase the benefits they receive from and increase positive action for the environment.

4. Our Recommendations

4.1 Recommendation 1: STRONGER TOGETHER

Greater collaboration and coordination across designated landscapes to work to a common set of national objectives, standards and performance criteria while reflecting local priorities.

Our recommendations:

- (a) Working together more closely as a national collective across all protected landscapes will create a clearer national voice, profile and brand for the designated landscape family, and enable consistently higher quality delivery, monitoring and reporting against national objectives such as the 25 YEP. National coordination, intelligence sharing, and collective direction across all designated landscape should be strengthened. This strengthen collective role will enable designated landscapes to deliver more and in new ways. It will require adequate resourcing and capability building, including for the national bodies, the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) and National Parks England. Natural England is well placed to support

and challenge the designated landscape family to define standards and agree their contribution towards national targets that deliver the 25 YEP. The contribution of designated landscapes should be reflected in the New Nature Strategy, with further refinement and development of the existing monitoring framework for designated landscapes (MEOPL) to ensure their contribution can be readily understood and assessed.

- (b) The membership of National Park Boards and AONB partnerships should be reviewed to ensure they reflect wider society and have the skills needed to drive their contribution to refocused national objectives, including the 25 YEP. For AONBs, the national interest should be better reflected, for example through independent appointments in line with National Park and Conservation Boards. Natural England already provides some *ad hoc* skills training to the designated landscape family e.g. how to meet Biodiversity 2020 targets and apply an ecosystems approach in AONB management planning. We could offer coordinated training for AONB Board members and local authority members on statutory purposes, and aspects of the 25 YEP which Defra has asked us to lead, for example the Nature Recovery Network, implementing Green Infrastructure standards and connecting people and nature. This provides a model which could be expanded upon across the Defra Group.
- (c) There is significant variation in the resourcing and consequent performance of designated landscapes. Current funding arrangements for AONBs should be improved to enable them to make an enhanced contribution to national priorities. This could include providing 100% of Grant in Aid directly from Defra rather than relying on local authorities to provide 25%. This would standardise funding arrangements, provide greater certainty over AONB allocations and avoid complex, annual negotiations with multiple authorities. Building the resilience of the NAAONB is also important. We recognise all designated landscape bodies have made strides to explore alternative funding options and would encourage more on this, including for example, renewed investigation of hypothecated visitor taxes and charges, and the role of trusts and charities and commercial income.
- (d) The existing statutory purposes of designated landscapes are broadly fit for purpose and should be retained. There are some small amendments to how natural beauty is defined which could be helpfully clarified through the Environment Bill, specifically to include wildlife and cultural heritage as part of natural beauty when considering AONBs, thereby aligning the legislation with how natural beauty is understood for National Parks.

4.2 Recommendation 2: CHAMPIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

Designated Landscapes should be exemplars for the enhancement of natural beauty and natural capital, delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan goals and sustainably providing thriving wildlife, multiple ecosystem services, health and well-being benefits into the future.

Our recommendations:

- (a) Every designated landscape should have a clear, shared and integrated vision for their landscape, setting out how they will be beautiful, wildlife-rich places for people to enjoy. To deliver this, designated landscape Management Plans should adopt a natural capital approach, clearly framed around the natural beauty, character and

special qualities of the landscape. Plans should always be developed and delivered in partnership with stakeholders, and hold shared objectives and visions with Local Development Plans. They should clearly identify, through a common set of goals, their contribution to national priorities. These should be underpinned by a shared evidence baseline and clear monitoring requirements to inform regular reporting. Natural England can support and collaborate with designated landscapes to develop shared objectives, provide standards and guidance, and assess performance in delivering 25 Year Environment Plan objectives, for example to help them assess their contribution to species recovery and habitat restoration targets and to explore options for future change with partners and communities.

- (b) In setting out their environmental objectives, designated landscape Management Plans could usefully address how they will seek to have impact beyond their boundaries, to promote partnership working and to extend the benefits of a healthy environment to neighbouring landscapes and communities. National Nature Reserve partnerships provide a useful model for how to bring local people together to deliver a shared vision that impacts beyond their boundaries, engaging with and delivering wider benefits to neighbouring communities.
- (c) Designated landscapes should play a central role in delivering a resilient, wildlife-rich Nature Recovery Network¹ that also provides active travel and recreation routes, linking populations to the benefits and services these areas of great natural beauty can provide. Natural England would be interested in working more closely with designated landscapes to trial new approaches to conservation that focus on creating resilient landscapes² through the restoration of ecosystems and natural capital and help build the Nature Recovery Network.
- (d) As highly valuable natural capital assets, land in designated landscapes should continue to attract agri-environment support. Strengthened land management plans, with clear targets and performance criteria, could potentially provide a local framework to support Environmental Land Management System, informing land managers of locally and nationally coherent priorities for landscape-scale activities.
- (e) Designated landscapes and constituent local authorities should, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, embed biodiversity net gain in their plans. They should adopt and apply metrics to achieve biodiversity net gain for developments within their boundaries, setting ambitious targets. They should pilot a wider environmental net gain approach to achieve wider 25 YEP targets including climate change, water quality, natural beauty and cultural heritage. Relevant Local Development Plans could support this by including a clear principle to seek net gain.

¹ One of the flagship initiatives in the 25 YEP is the development of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) as a key mechanism for recovery and delivering wider benefits including greater public enjoyment, pollination, water quality improvements and flood management. The NRN will link our existing habitat resources, including protected sites and major Nature Recovery Areas which should include Designated Landscapes.

² We define **resilient** landscapes and seas as capable of absorbing, resisting or recovering from disturbances and damage caused by natural perturbations and human activities, while continuing to meet overall objectives of supporting biodiversity, landscape character, geodiversity and benefits for people. This depends on functioning natural processes and society's support for sustainable management of the natural environment and cultural heritage.

The application of net gain funds could include net gain funding levied from outside the designated landscape.

- (f) Resourcing of designated landscapes should be reviewed to reflect the expected additional contribution to delivering national priorities, such as in the 25 YEP. Grant in Aid resourcing models should ensure that all have sufficient long-term capacity to work for, with and through local communities, businesses and other stakeholders to deliver reframed objectives and the 25 YEP. Priority allocation of net gain and ELMs funding should be targeted on delivery of local contributions to national targets such as developing designated landscapes as key elements of a Nature Recovery Network or species recovery.

4.3 Recommendation 3: MAKING THE MOST OF THE BEST.

New designations and boundary variations to be undertaken where they add substantial national value to the current series. The designation process should be simplified.

Our Recommendations:

- (a) We strongly recommend that Government focus is on improving the performance of existing designated landscapes and applying those benefits and their learning beyond their boundaries. New designations and boundary variations should be undertaken where they add substantial national value, for example in delivering targets in the 25YEP. This assessment should be supported by clear criteria.
- (b) Where new designations are required, the designation process should be reformed to:
 - i. Better identify and prioritise the best possible future designation options for the environment and society;
 - ii. Make designations or boundary variations more straightforward, to achieve within a reasonable timescale and within the constraints imposed by current legislation and precedent;
 - iii. Better harness the knowledge and commitment of willing stakeholders to assist in the designation process.

Natural England has developed proposals to reform the designation process in response to a request from Lord Gardiner. These have been shared separately with the Review Team. Options include the introduction of an initial assessment of proposed designations against criteria and a greater role for local stakeholders to provide supporting evidence for designation. Natural England could also explore developing a discretionary chargeable advice service to support applications. We encourage the Review to adopt these recommendations, subject to further consultation and testing with stakeholders. Natural England's resource in this area is currently limited. This will need to be reviewed if Government seeks greater urgency in delivering new and revised designations.

- (c) As an alternative to designating new or varying existing designated landscapes, Government could consider creating new mechanisms to recognise and afford protection to locally valued landscapes identified by communities and local authorities. These could include a new local level non-statutory designation for landscapes of local value, the concept of a suite of "National Park Cities" for England,

establishing a new “Living Coast” designation and a stronger role for green belts as breathing spaces connecting populations with surrounding countryside. These could have suitable status set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, such as that given to the Local Green Space Designation (paras 99-101). Natural England can provide technical advice and support to help develop such innovative approaches.

4.4 Recommendation 4: MORE EFFECTIVE LAND USE PLANNING

Strengthen the ability of designated landscapes, particularly AONB partnerships, to enhance their character and natural beauty and deliver environmental improvement through the quality and consistency of land use planning and related decisions.

Our Recommendations:

- (a) AONB partnerships should become statutory consultees on planning proposals affecting them. The governance of the partnerships and management of staff should be sufficiently independent from local authority influence to enable impartial discharge of these enhanced planning powers.
- (b) A strengthened duty should be placed on public bodies, including local planning authorities, ‘to have due regard’ to the statutory purposes of AONBs and National Parks, and consideration given to placing a statutory duty on these bodies ‘to have due regard’ for the aims and objectives of the designation’s management plan. Natural England could provide training to LPAs on this strengthened duty. There is also a stronger role for the designated landscape bodies (NAAONB and ENPA) to facilitate sharing of good practice amongst its members.
- (c) The role of AONB Partnerships should be strengthened. As set out in 4.1b above, the national interest could be better reflected through independent appointments to AONB Partnerships, in line with National Park and Conservation Boards. The Conservation Board model should be reviewed, if necessary amended, and be available to those AONBs Partnerships that want it.
- (d) Local authorities whose land falls within AONB boundaries could collaborate to provide a development plan document that is congruent with the AONB boundary. This would be consistent with the aims of the AONB Management Plan to avoid potential conflict and improve delivery. This approach has recently been applied to Arnside and Silverdale AONB.
- (e) Natural England should fully use its planning advisory and statutory consultee roles (including our duty to co-operate on strategic planning) to ensure that housing, transport and other development issues impacting on designated landscapes are properly discussed at an early stage in plan-making and NPPF policies are adhered to.
- (f) Amendments to planning processes, guidance and monitoring could improve the level of scrutiny applied to decisions and subsequent outcomes. Natural England has identified a number of small changes with potentially significant benefits including further Planning Practice Guidance to support the National Planning Policy Framework on the type, scale and extent of appropriate development within National Parks and AONBs. We would be pleased to share and explore these with the Review

team. We also recommend consideration is given to require local planning authorities to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for major development within National Parks and AONBs (under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009).

4.5 Recommendation 5: FOR PEOPLE, WITH PEOPLE.

Designated landscapes to pioneer new ways to connect more people from all parts of society with the natural environment, to raise awareness of, increase the benefits they receive from and increase positive action for the environment.

Our Recommendations:

- (a) Building on pioneering work such as the Mosaic project, all designated landscapes should be charged with and resourced to explore ways of encouraging under-represented groups to experience and benefit from the huge variety of experiences our finest landscapes offer. This could include partnership approaches to make better use of technology, developing clearer and consistent messages on their offer.
- (b) Many designated landscapes are close to people, for example, the NAAONB recognises that over 66% of people in England are within half an hour travel of an AONB, which means 156 million visitors annually. This presents real opportunities to increase direct benefits from visits. However, most of these visits are by car, and many designated landscapes are some distance from urban centres of population. This limits opportunities for many people to directly benefit from them regularly [[MENE Urban Greenspace Visits, 2018](#)]. Designated landscapes could usefully explore how to better connect with urban centres by considering how existing linear access routes, within and adjoining their boundaries, could provide a green infrastructure framework for enhanced biodiversity and recreation opportunities. Natural England is currently exploring a 'Low Speed 2' project with partners to link London and Birmingham via an enhanced landscape corridor along the Grand Union Canal. This would link urban areas and Green Belts with the Chilterns AONB, potentially providing a model for further, similar corridor initiatives.
- (c) There is currently no clear 'pathway' to progress from local health and wellbeing opportunities in towns to larger scale, more challenging, remote opportunities such as the ones that designated landscapes can provide. Natural England is working with Defra, the Department for Education, NHS England and Public Health England to increase the health and wellbeing benefits for people from the natural environment. Designated landscapes could work with these and other partners to offer consistency in scale, scope, quality and long-term sustainability of health and wellbeing benefits across England. Analysis of Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) data could provide a suitable baseline, and future surveys (MENE is currently being reviewed in light of technology changes and the 25 Year Environment Plan) should be able to provide insights about effectiveness and outcomes.
- (d) National Parks and AONBs should be encouraged to sign up to a principle of net gain of access land or Rights of Way. Specifically, National Parks could:

- (i) Consider dedicating any suitable land they own as permanent open access land under s16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Natural England can advise National Parks and AONBs on what is involved in open access dedication and on related issues of access management.
- (ii). Consider reviewing evidence on how a high quality Rights of Way network is best achieved in designated landscapes, including whether delegated management of, or potentially, transferred authority over the Rights of Way network should be extended to all National Park Authorities from Local Highway Authorities.
- (iii) Strategically identify where additional access is needed and how to support land managers to manage access impacts and benefits, particularly in high demand areas.

Natural England
December 2018



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 5 th March 2019	<u>Item</u> 8
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RESILIENT HERITAGE CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT - UPDATE

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Summary

This paper updates Partnership members on progress with the capacity building project for the AONB Partnership and Shropshire Hills AONB Trust, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage programme.

Recommendation

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

Background

This joint project between the AONB Partnership and Shropshire Hills AONB Trust is bringing in £38,100 of HLF grant over two years from March 2018.

A facilitation/ support contract has been let to Marches Sustainable Development (Adrian Cullis) to support development of Business Plans, and one facilitated workshop has been held with the AONB Trust trustees, and a further one for the Partnership with the Management Board and AONB team. There will be another facilitated workshop for each of these groups, followed by a session where the Trust trustees and the Management Board and team all come together. The Business Plans will include or be accompanied by Communications and Engagement Plans.

Some preparatory work has been done toward a skills audit, which will be carried out and lead to identification of training priorities, some of which can be funded through the project.

On development of income generation, two areas have progressed so far:

- A new leaflet has been printed for the Friends scheme and promotion activities undertaken.
- The Caering for Caradoc 'Fix the Fort' appeal has been launched.

Joy Howells is employed 1.5 days/week as the Funding & Programmes Officer and is working on the development of funding bids for new project.

Further external expert advice is available on other aspects of income generation including a legacy scheme, business engagement and trading. Opportunities will be sought to involve members of the Partnership and build capacity of the Partnership group through the project.

List of Background Papers

None.

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