

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

Date: Monday, 14 March 2022

Committee:
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Date: Tuesday, 22 March 2022
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

Tim Collard
Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services

Members of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chairman)	Steve Pennington
Hilary Clayton-Smith (Vice Chairman)	Wayne Barnes
Cecilia Motley (Vice Chairman)	Gillian Binks
Heather Kidd	Jim Bunce
Hilary Luff	Sarah Bury
Dan Morris	Pete Carty
Chris Turley	Janet Cobb
Alison Caffyn	Veronica Cossons
George Chancellor	Charles Edwards
Adrian Cullis	Rhona Goddard
Gillian Preece	Carol Griffiths
Fiona Williams	Robert Harris
Andrew Wood	Alan Jones
John Luck	Bill Klemperer
Ruth Houghton	Sue Lee
Mark Hughes	Hazel MacDowell
John Long	Leo Smith
David Mills	

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 - 6)

The note of the meeting held on 19 October 2021 is attached for confirmation

3 Government response to the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes (Pages 7 - 16)

This paper provides members with a draft submission, for comment and approval, to the government's consultation on its response to the Landscapes Review.

4 Farming in Protected Landscapes programme update (Pages 17 - 18)

This paper updates members on progress with the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme in the Shropshire Hills AONB.

5 NAAONB Historic Environment Statement (Pages 19 - 26)

This paper puts forward the NAAONB joint statement on historic environment for endorsement by the AONB Partnership.

6 Shropshire Good Food Charter (Pages 27 - 30)

This paper puts forward the Shropshire Good Food Charter for sign-up by the AONB Partnership

7 Ash Dieback Position Statement (Pages 31 - 34)

This paper presents members with a draft position statement on Ash dieback for comment and approval.

8 Shropshire Draft Destination Management Plan 2022-2025 (Pages 35 - 36)

This paper updates members on the draft Shropshire Destination Management Plan which has recently been prepared by consultants following stakeholder consultations.

9 Progress with Shropshire Local Plan Examination

To receive a verbal update on progress with Shropshire Local Plan examination.

10 Shropshire Hills AONB Trust Fund-Raising

To receive a verbal update on Shropshire Hills AONB Trust fund-raising

11 Partner activity

To receive brief updates and discussion from selected partners

12 Dates of Future Meetings

Members are advised that future meetings of the Partnership will be held on: -

Wednesday 12th July 2022 and
Tuesday 8th November 2022

All meetings at 9.30am



Shropshire Hills
AONB Partnership

22 March 2022

9.30 am

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON
19 OCTOBER 2021
9.30 - 11.50 AM CRAVEN ARMS COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward
Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Local Authorities
Shropshire Council

Cllr Heather Kidd
Cllr Hilary Luff
Cllr Dan Morris
Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member	Alison Caffyn
Individual Member	George Chancellor
Individual Member	Adrian Cullis
Individual Member	Gillian Preece
Individual Member	Fiona Williams
Individual Member	Andrew Wood
Town & Parish Council representative	John Luck
Town & Parish Council representative	Mark Hughes
Town & Parish Council representative	John Long
Town & Parish Council representative	David Mills
Caring for Gods Acre	Gill Binks
Country Land & Business Association	Alex Carson-Taylor (Chair)
Land Life & Livelihoods	Robert Harris
Longmynd Adventure Camp	Jim Bunce
Longmynd & District Bridleways Association	Sue Lee
/ British Horse Society	
Middle Marches Community Land Trust	Janet Cobb
National Farmers Union	Carol Griffiths
National Trust	Pete Carty
Ramblers Association	Charles Edwards
The Strettons Civic Society	Hilary Claytonsmith (Vice Chairman)
Upper Onny Wildlife Group	Leo Smith

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council

Clare Featherstone (Head of Culture & Leisure)
Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB
Partnership Staff Team

Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)
Joy Howells (Funding & Programmes Office)
Mike Kelly (Natural Environment Officer)
Nigel McDonald (Sustainable Tourism Officer)
Joe Penfold (Young Rangers Officer)

40 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

40.1 The retiring Chair James Williamson welcomed Jim Bunce, John Luck, Gill Preece and Fiona Williams to their first meeting of the Partnership.

40.2 Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Bury, Veronica Cossons, Charles Edwards, Ruth Houghton, Bill Klemperer, Nicola Stone and Chris Turley.

41 Minutes of the last meeting

41.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2021 had been circulated.

41.2 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership held on 31 March 2021 be approved as a true record

42 Appointment of Chair, Vice Chairs and Members of Strategy and Performance Committee

42.1 Appointment of Chair

The retiring Chair advised the meeting that one nomination had been received for the position of Chair.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Alex Carson-Taylor be elected Chair of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

Mr Carson-Taylor took the Chair and paid tribute to the work that Mr Williamson had done during his time as Chair. The AONB Partnership Manager also paid tribute and made a presentation to Mr Williamson on behalf of the Partnership.

41.2 Appointment of Vice Chair

The Chair advised the meeting that two nominations had been received for the positions of Vice Chair

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Cecilia Motley and Ms Hilary Claytonsmith be appointed Vice Chairs of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

41.3 Appointments to Seats on the Strategy and Performance Committee

The Chair advised that Ms Janet Cobb, Cllr. Heather Kidd, Mr John Long, Ms Fiona Williams and Mr Andrew Wood, had been nominated to serve on the Strategy and Performance Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Ms Janet Cobb, Cllr. Heather Kidd, Mr John Long, Ms Fiona Williams and Mr Andrew Wood be appointed to serve on the Strategy and Performance Committee

43 **Background Induction Briefing about the AONB and National Context, and discussion about future directions**

43.1 Members received a presentation from the AONB Partnership Manager which gave an introduction to the AONB designation and the work of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

44 **Update on Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and Development of Environmental Land Management (ELM)**

44.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which updated members on progress with the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme in the Shropshire Hills AONB.

44.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme was launched nationally on 1st July 2021 and that there £736,000 of funding available in the first year. He advised members that it was hoped to reprofile the funding and move some to years two and three.

44.3 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that in the region of 100 enquiries had been received and that so far 4 grants had been awarded. He added that the team were working with existing farmer clusters and groups to encourage applications especially from underrepresented areas both geographically and in terms of the programme themes.

44.4 Members expressed concerns that some grants were pegged at the same levels as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme as often these were too low to encourage works.

44.5 Members received a short presentation from the Chair which updated them on the proposed replacements for the Basic Payment Scheme and existing agri-environment schemes.

45 Partner Activity

- 45.1 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that this item was an opportunity for Partnership Members to update the full Partnership on their activity and that if any members wished to give updated to a future meeting to let him know.
- 45.2 Carol Griffiths gave an update from the NFU. She advised the meeting that NFU members were becoming increasingly concerned with the number and complexity of schemes coming forward and a lack of clarity coming out of DEFRA on the schemes, a fact borne out in a recent report from the National Audit Office. She added that one point of concern was the fact that some of the proposed schemes run for 25 years which may cause problems with succession planning.
- 45.3 Mrs Griffiths added that other concerns were the loss of tenanted farms with an increase in landlords taking farms back in hand or developing share farming agreements and the loss of food producing land as part of carbon offset schemes where land was being bought up to plant trees on.
- 45.4 Clare Featherstone, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager Shropshire Council gave an update. She informed the meeting that Shropshire Council were currently developing a new Shropshire Council Plan to clarify priorities which would focus on inequalities, climate change, skills and employment and the natural environment. The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager advised that currently there was a significant gap in funding for 2022/23 and that currently 65% of overall funding was now being spent on social care.
- 45.5 The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager informed the Partnership that following the retirement of the Director of Children's Services the Adults and Children's Directorates had been merged to form a People Directorate and a new Health and Wellbeing Directorate was being formed.
- 45.6 The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager reminded members that Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services were brought together in April 2020 and that the overall aim was to continue to develop Shropshire as a vibrant destination, with high quality, paid for cultural activities that will support community activities for those in most need. To help deliver the climate change agenda and there would be a focus on health and wellbeing, with the Services being closely linked to Public Health. She advised the meeting that a redesign of services was being undertaken which would reduce duplication, increase income generation and increase grant funding.
- 45.7 The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager advised members that "Vibrant Shropshire" the Cultural Strategy for 2021-31 had been published. (<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/vibrant-shropshire>) and that the Team were currently working with the Arts Council on the development of a Cultural Compact which was a cross-sector independent partnership which would facilitate the co-delivery of Cultural Strategy, lead a step-change in the sustainability and contribution of culture to the life of Shropshire and help develop the local cultural sector and boost its engagement with health agencies, business, universities and other sectors. She added that this would be supported by DCMS and bring Shropshire to the forefront of culture nationally, working with Cultural Compacts in other places.

45.8 The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager advised the meeting that from 1st November she would become the Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism following the retirement of the current head and a new management team would be in place as follows: -

- Culture and Communities Manager - Pete Banford
- Culture and Tourism Manager - Andrea Fox
- Infrastructure, Contracts and Compliance Manager - Grant Wilson
- CLT Development Manager - Paul Gossage
- Support Officer - Alastair Pack

She informed the meeting that a second stage restructure was planned, which would increase collaboration across services, and it was hoped that this would be in place by April 2022 and that it was not envisaged that there would be any impact on the AONB Team, other than to offer more opportunities for joint working and to benefit from more joined up marketing.

45.9 The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager advised the Partnership that from 1st November the Council's officer representative for the AONB Partnership would be Pete Banford.

46 Shropshire Hills Young Rangers and Green Leaders Projects

46.1 Members received a presentation from Joe Penfold, Young Rangers Project Officer which gave an update on the Young Rangers and Green Leaders projects.

46.2 Members welcomed the projects and the opportunities that it gave young people in the AONB.

47 National Association for AONBs update, including collaborative work on climate change

47.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which updated members on some recent activity of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).

47.2 The AONB Partnership Manager updated members on the collaborative work which the NAAONB was carrying out which included a series of workshops and collaboration on climate change work.

48 Shropshire Local Plan Examination

48.1 The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the Shropshire Council Local Plan had been submitted for examination, but it was not currently known when this would take place. He added that the Partnership had made a further five responses at the Regulation 19 consultation stage some of which had been accepted. He advised the members that the Partnership had opted not to take part in the formal examination but that he had contacted the Programme Officer and had agreed that he would provide further information or clarification where needed.

49 AONB Team Work Programme Update

49.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which gave an update on the recent activity of the AONB team.

49.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded Members that the Strategy & Performance Committee oversaw the work of the team in more detail so the item was here largely for information but that they should contact him if they had any queries.

50 Dates of Future Meetings

50.1 Members were advised that the next meeting of the Partnership would be held on Tuesday 22nd March 2022 at 9.30am.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 nd March 2022	<u>Item</u> 3
---	-----------------------------

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE GLOVER REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

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

Summary

This paper provides members with a draft submission, for comment and approval, to the government's consultation on its response to the Landscapes Review.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to approve the draft Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership submission, subject to comments.

Background

The government's response to the Landscapes Review was published on 15th January 2022. The response looks to enact many of the recommendations of the Landscapes Review, and includes a consultation on certain aspects, focussing on those which will require legislative change. The government's response is on the whole to be welcomed, but there are missed opportunities, and it does not really represent the big step change for AONBs that the Glover Review set out.

The National Association for AONBs has been running theme groups on a number of topics to discuss the response and formulate its position to inform ongoing discussions with Defra. The close relationship of the National Association with Defra is such that its written response to the current consultation, while important, is not the only route of dialogue and influence with Defra. The Partnership is recommended to support the NAAONB position, which centres around Proposal 24 of the Glover Review, which recommended that: '*AONBs be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes*'. A summary of the NAAONB position is set out in relation to five themes linked to this proposal:

Purposes: Extension and revision of AONB purposes to reflect contemporary priorities for AONB, natural beauty with a strengthened link to nature recovery on a landscape scale and the importance of cultural heritage. A second purpose to promote understanding and enjoyment of the area.

Powers: Strengthening the 'duty of regard' linked to strengthening the status of AONB management plan, a formal role in planning and development management.

Resources: A doubling of core funding over this parliament (three years), leading to a dynamic and progressive formula which reflects ambition and future needs.

Governance: Robust minimum governance standards which provide sufficient independence to guarantee the integrity of the designation, dynamic and more representative of the wider UK population.

National Landscapes: Ready to engage in a discussion on renaming where this reflects the step change above.

Together these changes represent a statutory designated landscape, by design, fit for the 21st century – delivering more for climate, nature and people – looking forward, but built on the legacy and learning from 70 years of AONB.

The government consultation is closely structured through the questions asked, but there is an opportunity for general comments at the end, so it is proposed to use the on-line questionnaire rather than submit a freestanding response.

List of Background Papers
Landscapes review (National Parks and AONBs): government response: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response .
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 Draft Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership response to government consultation on the Landscapes Review response

Appendix 1 Draft Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership response to government consultation on the Landscapes Review response (an online questionnaire)

[Qs 1-5 personal details]

Overview

Implementing some aspects of our response to the review will require changes to legislation, subject to securing parliamentary time. We are seeking public views on support for these proposed legislative changes, and their potential effects on different groups and interests. We are also interested to hear any wider views on other aspects of our response to the review.

A stronger mission for nature recovery

6. Should a strengthened first purpose of protected landscapes follow the proposals set out in Chapter 2?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

We support the case for strengthening the purpose to include reference to nature recovery and wildlife/biodiversity. The state of nature and natural processes in our landscapes is such that the more static goal of conserving, even along with enhancing, is no longer adequate. Natural capital is a useful concept but we are unsure about the inclusion of this in statutory purposes.

The statutory purposes have always been for the designation and not just for an AONB organisation (indeed AONB organisations mostly did not appear until several decades after the designations themselves were made). The designation has power and influence beyond the capacity of the 'lead partners' – through duties on public bodies, and expectations of delivery by many partnership members and other parties. The different purposes ascribed to AONB Conservation Boards are an exception to this and apply specifically to the organisation. However the consultation document refers in places to amending purposes for "AONB teams and National Park Authorities" (Stronger mission for nature recovery section). The purposes are more than this – they are for the designation itself and therefore influence the actions of many other parties. We should not diminish the wider power of the designation by focussing solely on AONB organisations. This is an unfortunate consequence of the common shorthand of describing the organisations as 'AONBs', and any move to a National Landscapes terminology should seek to resolve this and enable the organisations to be easily distinguished from the designated area itself.

7. Which other priorities should be reflected in a strengthened first purpose e.g. climate, cultural heritage? Please give us your views

Climate change is acknowledged now as a global emergency and has profound consequences for everything that AONBs seek to protect, and so we support specific reference to climate change in updated purposes. Most actions in support of AONB aims will be entirely compatible with, and contribute to, urgent action to address climate change. There are however some potential conflicts between certain possible climate actions (e.g. some large scale renewable energy installations) and AONB special qualities. The amended wording of a purpose should include some concept of balance of these factors.

Cultural heritage has always been understood to be a key part of landscape, but the word 'landscape' is not used in the purposes and the term 'natural beauty' is often felt to overlook the cultural dimension, so including this explicitly would be good.

Agricultural transition

8. Do you support any of the following options as we develop the role of protected landscapes in the new environmental land management schemes? Tick all that apply.

- ✓ **Designing the environmental land management schemes in a way that works for all farmers and land managers, including the specific circumstances for those in protected landscapes, recognising that farmers in these areas are well-placed to deliver on our environmental priorities.**
- ✓ **Using Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify projects or habitats within protected landscapes.**
- ✓ **Monitoring the effectiveness and uptake of the new environmental land management schemes in protected landscapes. Using this to inform whether further interventions are needed to ensure we are on track for wider nature recovery ambitions.**
- ✓ **Creating a clear role for protected landscape organisations in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Our recent LNRS consultation specifically asks for views on the role of different organisations in the preparation of LNRSs, including protected landscapes.**
- ✓ **Building on FiPL, empowering protected landscapes to support decision-making and delivery against agreed priorities, including through dedicated project coordinators and advisers.**

[All options supported].

9. Do you have any views or supporting evidence you would like to input as we develop the role of protected landscapes in the new environmental land management schemes?

Please give us your views

Agri-environment schemes have been one of the most important delivery mechanisms of AONB objectives in the past, and we expect ELM to be also in future. Targeting informed by the priorities of AONB Management Plans will help to ensure this. The experience of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme will be useful in developing the role of protected landscapes in ELM, but it is still relatively early days with this and there is more to learn. We would welcome an ongoing dialogue about this. We have been involved in some Tests & Trials from which there will also be relevant lessons.

A stronger mission for connecting people and places

10. Should AONBs have a second purpose relating to connecting people and places, equivalent to that of National Parks?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

This longstanding anomaly should be resolved – AONBs are just as important to people as National Parks, and most AONB organisations are active in promoting enjoyment and understanding. Including this in purposes would firm up this area of work.

11. Should a strengthened second purpose of protected landscapes follow the proposals set out in Chapter 3 to improve connections to all parts of society with our protected landscapes?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

AONBs should be for everyone. There is a significant issue with under-representation among some parts of society among those enjoying AONBs, and highlighting this specifically in revised purposes will encourage greater action to address this. We support the proposal that the wording of the second purpose should be more up to date and inclusive than the existing 'enjoyment and understanding' purpose of the National Parks.

12. Are there any other priorities that should be reflected in a strengthened second purpose?

Please give us your views

Health and wellbeing are vital benefits from protected landscapes which should be referenced in the purpose in order to ensure they are a focus for action.

Managing visitor pressures

13. Do you support any of the following options to grant National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority greater enforcement powers to manage visitor pressures? Tick all that apply.

Issue Fixed Penalty Notices for byelaw infringements

Make Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

Issue Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to control the amount and type of traffic on roads

Please give reasons for your answer:

Question applies to National Parks and the Broads only.

14. Should we give National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority and local highway authorities additional powers to restrict recreational motor vehicle use on unsealed routes?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

15. For which reasons should National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and local authorities exercise this power? (select all that apply)

- ✓ Environmental protection
- ✓ Prevention of damage
- ✓ Nuisance
- ✓ Amenity

Other (please state)

Question applies to National Parks and the Broads only.

16. Should we legislate to restrict the use of motor vehicles on unsealed unclassified roads for recreational use, subject to appropriate exemptions?

Yes – everywhere

Yes – in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty only

Yes – in National Parks only

No

Unsure

Please give reasons for your answer:

The countryside outside protected landscapes also has valued environmental and amenity qualities and is enjoyed and important for recreation. It would be wrong if efforts better to safeguard protected landscapes resulted in increased harm to non-designated areas. Motorised off-road recreation is inherently intrusive in the countryside and often environmentally damaging, and there should be greater controls everywhere on this.

17. What exemptions do you think would be required to protect the rights and enjoyment of other users e.g., residents, businesses etc?

Please give us your views

There may be a case for some exemptions for private interests – we are more focused on public benefits, so other respondents will be better placed to argue the case for exemptions.

The role of AONB teams in planning

18. What roles should AONBs teams play in the plan-making process to achieve better outcomes?

Please give us your views

Good practice for AONB teams in relation to planning has always been to focus on plan-making more than casework. With the limited capacity of AONB teams and the obligation on local authorities themselves to take account of the purposes of designation in determining applications, putting most of the available AONB team effort into plan-making is likely to be more effective. This should certainly include input to policy development, but will often include collaborative work on supporting evidence, and helping to prepare additional guidance beyond the Local Plan itself (e.g. Design Statements). Ensuring the AONB Management Plan has the best possible influence in planning as a 'material consideration' will also be very important. Many local authorities have lost capacity and expertise on landscape in the last 10-15 years and this can result in AONB teams being drawn into work that should be done by the local authorities themselves, and this trend should be guarded against.

19. Should AONB teams be made statutory consultees for development management?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

As studies have shown, AONBs are not in practice adequately protected by the planning system and are repeatedly harmed by inappropriate development despite apparently having the same landscape value and protection as National Parks. Statutory consultee status will not solve this altogether, but is one feasible method to help address this. The additional responsibility would need to be resourced with additional core funding,

and as below in Q20, AONB organisations should be able to agree what categories of application they would be consulted on.

With any legal responsibility, there is a need for clarity about where exactly it sits, and for AONBs this needs careful consideration. The question asks 'should AONB teams be statutory consultees'. AONB staff teams are almost all employed by local authorities and it is hard to see that staff teams within an authority can be a statutory consultee to that authority. The terminology explanation of the document says that 'AONB teams' is taken to mean AONB Conservation Boards and Partnerships (though AONB teams is usually taken to mean staff teams). The Conservation Board structure lends well to being a statutory consultee. However AONB Partnerships in most cases (including ours) are Joint Advisory Committees, which have legal status but are not legal entities. They cannot hold their own finances or contractual obligations and these are therefore held by the host authority. JACs usually are established through Terms of Reference under the Constitutions of the constituent local authorities rather than being constituted bodies themselves. We are not clear if such a structure can be a statutory consultee. Since the statutory consultee role is essentially to offer advice which is what JACs are established to do, this seems compatible, but we have not seen a full examination of the legal issues. If JACs can indeed be statutory consultees, there would certainly be a need for improved governance structure around this role – it would create more power within the JAC and this needs to be accompanied by robust procedures and appointment processes, and including clear schemes of delegation for the involvement of AONB staff teams. The balance of planning input being sought from professional staff or from elected committees needs to be clarified. The requirement for organisational clarity related to statutory consultee status links to our position that AONB governance (see Q21) needs to be strengthened more generally.

20. If yes, what type of planning applications should AONB teams be consulted on?

- ✓ **AONB teams should formally agree with local planning authorities which planning applications should be consulted on.**
- AONB teams should be consulted on all planning applications that require an Environmental Impact Assessment and are categorised as 'major development' as well as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
- Other (please state)

Local governance

21. Which of the following measures would you support to improve local governance? Tick all that apply.

- Improved training and materials
- Streamlined process for removing underperforming members
- Greater use of advisory panels
- Greater flexibility over the proportion of national, parish and local appointments
- Merit-based criteria for local authority appointments
- Reduced board size
- Secretary of State appointed chair
- Other (please state) **[None of above ticked]**
 - **National minimum standards and expectations for local authority hosting where this remains the model**

- **A viable model (probably as a modernised streamlined version of Conservation Boards) to enable some larger AONB structures to become independent entities**

Please give reasons for your answer:

The bullet points in the question are mainly applicable to National Park Authorities and do not have much applicability to Joint Advisory Committee AONB structures. Neither the Landscapes Review itself or the government response appear really to have grasped the nature and needs of AONB governance. Joint Advisory Committees such as ours can be large but they are advisory bodies and not strictly governance decision bodies. They have more in common with a National Park Partnership than a National Park Authority board. As such the governance debate for AONBs is not just about committees - most of the executive governance roles are held by host local authorities, an arrangement for which there is no longer any national guidance/ standard or any governing document (following demise of the earlier Memorandums with Defra), which can lead to problems. The acute funding pressures local authorities are under means that the assumptions that an authority will in relation to AONB structures and hosting always act in the best interests of the AONB is sadly no longer necessarily true. While the principle of localism and locally relevant approaches is relevant to AONBs, there has been a steady erosion of national standards or guidance and this now needs to be addressed.

We also need a dialogue about an available model for independent AONB structures, based on modernising and streamlining the Conservation Board model. Considerable effort went into establishing this model within the CROW Act 2000, but it has been only used in two areas, with some drawbacks now apparent of its cumbersome nature, and it seems limited appetite from government for further use of the model. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership made in 2017 a formal bid to create a Conservation Board, but this proposal was shelved by Defra pending the Landscapes Review. Neither the Review itself nor the government's response however makes any reference to future use of the Conservation Board model or anything similar to replace it. While our local situation has moved on, there remains interest in this possibility both here and elsewhere in the national AONB family, and this option really needs exploring by Defra in consultation with the AONB network.

A clearer role for public bodies

22. Should statutory duties be strengthened so that they are given greater weight when exercising public functions?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

The Section 85 duty has proved to be weak, and wording changes have been recommended which would considerably help in strengthening this duty.

23. Should statutory duties be made clearer with regards to the role of public bodies in preparing and implementing management plans?

Yes

Please give reasons for your answer:

It is a major weakness of the AONB Management Plan that it is a statutory requirement to prepare and review it, but there is no duty at all on implementing it.

General power of competence

Before answering, please see the section titled 'General power of competence' (page 24)
24. Should National Parks Authorities and the Broads Authority have a general power of competence?

Yes No Unsure

Please give reasons for your answer:

Question applies to National Parks and the Broads only.

Overall

25. If you have any further comments on any of the proposals in this document, please include them here.

The government's response to the Landscapes Review is welcomed overall and will take forward many of the Review's recommendations. We support the position of the National Association for AONBs in relation to the government response, and have been actively involved in recent theme-based discussions both within the Association and in some Defra-led workshops. In line with the NAAONB position, we feel the main area not addressed adequately by the government response is resourcing. We understand Defra's positive intention on this and the constraints there clearly are, but this is a crucial factor on which we feel obliged to press further. The other changes being taken forward will in many cases add to the work of small and already stretched AONB teams and organisations, and in absence of extra core resources they merely raise expectations even higher and will leave us even more stretched and thinly spread. We support the NAAONB call for a doubling of core funding over this parliament (three years), leading to a dynamic and progressive funding formula for protected landscapes which reflects ambition and future needs.

We also support the NAAONB position in relation to potential renaming of AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. As part of a broader step change for AONBs and their organisations, this name change could bring benefits, and can set out a visionary and exciting designation for the 21st century. A move to National Landscapes should not be just a superficial rebrand. The common conflation of AONB designated areas and AONB organisations as 'AONBs' frequently causes confusion (e.g. 'influence of the AONB', 'having regard to the AONB', 'contribution of the AONB', even 'funding for the AONB' – all mean very different things when applying to the designated area or the organisation). It also subconsciously blinkers our thinking by unintentionally placing all the onus on AONB teams and organisations, when in fact a key principle of the AONB model is to encourage supporting action by a wide range of organisations and other parties. The rebrand really needs to establish new terminology to resolve this longstanding problem.

This page is intentionally left blank



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 nd March 2022	<u>Item</u> 4
---	-----------------------------

UPDATE ON FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES PROGRAMME

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

Summary

This paper updates members on progress with the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme in the Shropshire Hills AONB.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note progress with the programme and consider how they as members and their organisations can help support good uptake and applications.

Background

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is approaching the end of its first year (from 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2022), with two more years to come.

In the Shropshire Hills AONB 16 projects have been supported with grants so far and a further two are currently being finalised, some of which will continue into years 2 and 3. Five applications have been declined. Three projects have been amended for slightly altered delivery and one or two have not been able to complete all of their planned year 1 work, though most are on schedule. The Panel is working very well, with all members contributing well and collectively having relevant and useful knowledge.

We had the opportunity through Defra to reprofile a substantial amount of the Year 1 allocation into years 2 and 3 rather than lose this. The revised allocation for 2021-22 was £210,692 and the expected total spend £179,750 (including admin and advice costs), of which £102,447 is grants. Almost all of the expected underspend (£30,000 of £30,942) has been returned to Defra to enable allocation if possible to other areas within this Financial Year. This underspend represents approximately £15k from our projects' allocation and £15k from our original admin/guidance staffing budget.

For 2022-23 the budget available for grants is £814,981 and for 2023-24 it is £691,142. We have around £124k allocated for years 2 and 3 from projects already approved (including two still being finalised). At current levels of uptake this is still a fairly large amount of money and we will be doing as much as we can to promote the programme and attract good applications.

As planned, we have spread our resourcing of admin and advice of the programme across the team with Alison Jones taking the lead on provision of Advice & Guidance with support from Cath, Nigel and Mike. Joy has taken the lead on Administration and Management with support from Phil and Alison Kay. We are updating and improving the local priorities part of the guidance and have let small contracts for a few days of consultancy strategic advice to develop the priority themes of Climate and People which are less well represented in projects so far than Nature and Place.

Brief summaries of the grants awarded so far are available at

<https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/farming-in-protected-landscapes/farming-in-protected-landscapes-projects>.

List of Background Papers
Full information and guidance for applicants is at https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/farming-in-protected-landscapes .
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



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 nd March 2022	Item 5
---	-----------------------------

NAAONB HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT

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

Summary

This paper puts forward the NAAONB joint statement on historic environment for endorsement by the AONB Partnership.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to endorse the statement.

Background

The purpose of the statement is to maintain the profile of historic environment work in AONBs (both by AONB teams and others). This is especially relevant when most of our drivers now come from Defra, which does not cover historic environment.

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 Appendix 1 Joint statement on the historic environment in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

This Statement is a declaration of ambition and intent made between the 34 **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty** in England, **Historic England** and the **National Association for AONBs (NAAONB)**. All parties have an interest in, or responsibility for, the historic environment within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Shared Principles:

1. AONBs are national assets.
2. The landscapes of AONBs have been created by centuries of interaction between people and the environment.
3. The historic environment is fundamental to the distinctive character, sense of place and natural beauty of each AONB.
4. The principle that landscapes are an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity underpin our actions, as set out in the European Landscape Convention (ELC) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Protected Landscapes.
5. By working together the parties can further the understanding, conservation, enhancement and public enjoyment and appreciation of the historic environment in AONBs.

Purpose of the statement

The historic environment is an intrinsic component of the character of today's world and a physical record of the past. It represents the investment of centuries of skills, resources and cultural influences that can never be replaced. It explains the development of the landscape and gives each place its distinctive character and sense of place. Culture, customs and rural traditions are essential elements of cultural and historic landscapes that forms tangible links to the past.

The historic and cultural environment is valuable for its own sake, but also generates jobs and attracts people to live and work in an area. It encourages businesses to invest and tourists to visit. It is a resource that needs to be used carefully and sustainably: a non-renewable resource, we lose or degrade it at our peril.

The parties to this statement recognise that the landscapes of AONBs have been created by centuries of interaction between people and nature, and the historic environment is fundamental to the character of today's AONB landscapes. The parties recognise the key role AONB partnerships make in the sustainable management of the historic environment, and the contribution that well-managed heritage can make to local economies, generating inward investment, employment, facilitating local branding and attracting visitors from home and abroad. The parties also recognise that historic environment and cultural heritage contribute to health and wellbeing and can be a positive education resource as better understanding of the past enables us to plan better for the future.

It is therefore the stated intention of the parties to this statement to work together to conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment. The parties will collaborate to further the understanding, conservation, public enjoyment and appreciation of the historic environment in AONBs. This collaborative work is needed not only in relation to scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas and registered parks, gardens, sites and landscapes but with regard to the whole of the historic environment, the historic character of the wider landscape and cultural heritage.

Areas of Collaboration

The 34 English AONBs agree to:

1. Incorporate objectives into AONB Management Plans relating to the understanding, conservation, enhancement, management and public engagement and enjoyment of the historic environment of AONBs.
2. Secure better understanding, conservation, management and interpretation of the historic environment of AONBs.
3. Seek appropriate advice from relevant agencies and local authority historic environment professionals on proposals or work that has relevance to the historic environment.
4. Ensure Historic England is updated on who the key AONB contacts are on an annual basis and ensure that Historic England is kept engaged in the direction and delivery of AONBs work.
5. Undertake collaborative working and actively pursue opportunities to improve the condition of heritage@risk and other heritage assets. AONBs will work with partners to monitor the historic environment and assist in the provision of data as to condition and trends together with evidence of positive intervention undertaken or instigated by AONBs.

Historic England agrees to:

1. Assist in developing AONB Management Plan historic environment objectives and any associated strategies and programmes through:
 - the provision of strategic advice, and
 - the periodic provision and review of statutory heritage data specific to AONBs.
2. Ensure that AONBs are fully reflected in the Historic England programmes of research and characterisation in order to enhance the opportunities for Historic England and AONB partnerships and secure better understanding, conservation, management and interpretation of the historic environment of AONBs.

3. Ensure each AONB is updated on who their key Historic England contacts are and ensure that AONBs are kept engaged in the priorities and delivery of Historic England's work.

The NAAONB agrees to:

1. Provide key contact details for AONB units to Historic England on an annual basis through the collaborative platform – the National Landscapes Forum.

2. Encourage NAAONB members and others to incorporate objectives into AONB Management Plans relating to the understanding, conservation, and public engagement and enjoyment of the historic environment of AONBs.

3. Encourage NAAONB members and others to secure better understanding, conservation, management, and interpretation of the historic environment of AONBs.

4. Encourage NAAONB members and others to Seek appropriate advice from relevant agencies and local authority historic environment professionals on proposals or work that has relevance to the historic environment.

5. Encourage NAAONB members and others to Work to integrate their activities with those relevant activities of Historic England.

National Action Plan

It is the ambition of parties to produce a National Action Plan that can be reviewed by the partners to deliver shared objectives. The drafting of an Action Plan and sharing of best practice, case studies and research will be facilitated through the new digital platform hosted by NAAONB – the National Landscapes Forum.

It is the ambition of all parties to review of the Action Plan every five years to provide an opportunity to review the state of the historic environment of AONBs (including use of Heritage at Risk data) and direct reporting from AONBs on AONB Management Plan delivery to identify future priorities for action.

Together the parties will collaborate and encourage others to promote the sustainable management of the historic environment in AONBs by:

1. Showcasing exemplary projects and schemes.
2. Dissemination of appropriate guidance and codes of best practice.
3. Establishment of a historic environment working group of interested AONBs

Application of the statement

This statement applies to the 34 AONBs in England. It has effect from *[replace with revised date]* will be monitored annually and reviewed (along with the Action Plan)

every 5 years by the parties. The Statement does not affect the statutory duties of the respective organisations.

Parties to the statement

Historic England

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. They are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). They champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

They do this by:

- Championing historic places
- Identifying and protecting our heritage
- Supporting change
- Understanding historic places and
- Providing expertise at a local level

Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Historic England is required to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, abbreviated to AONB, are outstanding landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is safeguarded in the national interest.

There are 34 AONBs in England, created by the legislation of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. Protection of AONBs was further enhanced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (CRoW2000).

AONB landscapes range from rugged coastline, dunes, salt marshes, peatlands, woodlands and estuaries to water meadows, gentle downland and upland moors.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to **conserve** and **enhance** the natural beauty of the area. Social and economic development which contributes to the natural beauty of the AONB is encouraged so that communities are strengthened, and the experiences for locals and visitors alike are improved.

AONBs are designated because of their individual qualities. These include their flora, fauna, historical and cultural associations as well as scenic views. They are living and working landscapes that have been, and continue to be, shaped by nature and human activity.

Arnside & Silverdale
Blackdown Hills
Cannock Chase
Chichester Harbour
Chilterns
Cornwall
Cotswolds
Cranborne Chase
Dedham Vale
Dorset
East Devon
Forest of Bowland
High Weald
Howardian Hills
Isle of Wight
Isles of Scilly
Kent Downs
Lincolnshire Wolds
Malvern Hills
Mendip Hills
Nidderdale
Norfolk Coast
North Devon
North Pennines
North Wessex Downs
Northumberland Coast
Quantock Hills
Shropshire Hills
Solway Coast
South Devon
Suffolk Coast and Heaths
Surrey Hills
Tamar Valley
Wye Valley

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) was formed in 1998 as an independent organisation to act on behalf of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales

The NAAONB became a Charitable Company limited by guarantee on 14th October 2014 having previously operated as an incorporated controlled company limited by guarantee.

The NAAONB has established itself as the voice of the AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards by working closely with them, and with Local Authorities, statutory agencies, central governments, and other interested bodies. By doing so it furthers the work of AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards and helps them deliver their statutory responsibilities.

The NAAONB

- is an influential, trusted organisation that is accepted as the voice of the AONB network,
- encourages and harnesses the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the AONB network,
- brings the AONB network together as a cohesive and coherent entity,
- develops and supports collaboration across all designated landscapes,
- celebrates the unique identity of its individual members,
- collaborates with others to achieve shared objectives, and
- is the single point of contact with the AONB network for governments.

This page is intentionally left blank



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 nd March 2022	<u>Item</u> 6
---	-----------------------------

SHROPSHIRE GOOD FOOD CHARTER

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

Summary

This paper puts forward the Shropshire Good Food Charter for sign-up by the AONB Partnership.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to sign up to the Good Food Charter in order to provide support for sustainable land management.

Background

The Shropshire Good Food Charter is an initiative of the Shropshire Good Food Partnership which was formed in 2021 with a vision “for regenerative food, farming and land-use systems” and a mission is “to bring people together to create a local food system which is good for people, place and the planet”. The Partnership will “support the work of organisations across the county, catalyse new initiatives and collaborations, and enable joined-up innovative thinking to improve access to good food and reimagine land stewardship.” It works with businesses, community representatives and the public sector. A number of focus areas have come out of a wide stakeholder engagement process:

- Grow Local – co-ordination and support hub for people championing local growing
- Sustainable Food Economy – connecting producers and consumers, building local food resilience
- Wise Land Stewardship – combines food production with biodiversity and environmental goods, encouraging connection with nature and building capacity for adaptation and resilience to climate change
- Soul Food – nature connection through productive activities
- Reducing Food Waste – tackling the third of food produced which is wasted
- Healthy Food for All – supporting Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance

The AONB Partnership has especially strong connections to the Wise land stewardship strand of work, but other areas also link with good management of the AONB.

The visible sign-up to the Charter by us is a valuable way to support the Good Food Partnership, but it is also a valuable networking group. Organisations and individuals on the AONB Partnership may wish to consider whether they might also sign up to the Charter.

List of Background Papers

Further information at <https://www.shropshiregoodfood.org/>.

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 Good Food Charter.



SHROPSHIRE GOOD FOOD CHARTER

GOOD FOOD IS VITAL TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE IN SHROPSHIRE

WHAT IS GOOD FOOD?



HEALTHY

It provides nourishment and enables people to thrive



GREEN

It is produced in a nature-positive way and not wasted



FAIR

Everyone along the food chain has been treated well



ACCESSIBLE

Quality food is available to all

If you believe that everyone should be able to enjoy good food, sign up to the principles in this Charter and commit to doing one thing to help make it happen.

We.....

Sign up to the **Shropshire Good Food Charter.**

Become a member and display your signed charter. Sign up now by visiting: www.shropshiregoodfood.org

THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD FOOD

GOOD FOR PEOPLE

Everyone has access to local, affordable, quality food and the knowledge and skills to grow, buy, cook and enjoy good food.

GOOD FOR PLACE

We are connected through food to each other and the land, there is a thriving local food economy supporting jobs with fair wages and creating a regionally distinctive food culture.

GOOD FOR PLANET

Our food system enables environmental regeneration, working with nature, reducing carbon emissions, enhancing climate resilience, and minimising waste and packaging.





SHROPSHIRE GOOD FOOD CHARTER



WHAT CAN YOU DO?



As an individual

As a business or institution

BUY more of your food from local independent food enterprises and retailers.



GROW some of your own foods at home or in your community allotments, farm or orchard.



COOK great meals from scratch using fresh, seasonal, local and organic produce.



EAT more plants and sustainable meat and dairy.



MAKE the most of your food and minimise waste, compost any that you can't use.



KNOW your food, ask where it comes from and how it was produced. Choose fairly traded goods and trusted labels like MSC for fish.



ASK your workplace or school to serve only food that is good for people, place and the planet.



PROCURE healthy and sustainable food that supports local economic prosperity.



PROVIDE opportunities for people to grow, cook and eat food together.



BE responsible for reducing food waste and packaging. Commit to redistribution of surplus food.



SERVE only good food to your students or employees, patients or customers.



PROMOTE the Charter through communication channels & influence.



KNOW your supply chain, work with suppliers to reduce your carbon footprint.



BRING people together to celebrate Shropshire's regional food heritage.



PROVIDE leadership and advocate for regenerative food systems.





<p><u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership</p> <p>22nd March 2022</p>	<p><u>Item</u></p> <p>7</p>
--	------------------------------------

ASH DIEBACK POSITION STATEMENT

Responsible Officer Mike Kelly, Natural Environment Officer
 e-mail: mike.kelly@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254743

Summary

This paper presents members with a draft position statement on Ash dieback for comment and approval.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to approve the statement subject to any comments.

Background

The impacts of ash dieback are increasing steadily around the Shropshire Hills as elsewhere in the country. We are commenting on an increasing number of felling licence applications related to ash dieback, confirming this.

Whilst awareness of ash dieback is increasing, perhaps how to manage its spread less so, raising concerns that in some cases more felling is being done than necessary, resulting in unnecessary harm to the landscape. There are options for managing affected ash trees that mitigate against risk to people or property.

The purpose of this statement is to highlight particular issues and sources of guidance, and discourage and over-zealous response to the disease resulting in a faster loss of trees, including potentially healthy or disease resistant trees.

<p>List of Background Papers None</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>

Community / Consultations Appraisal

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 Ash Dieback – Conserving and Managing Ash Trees and Woodlands in the Shropshire Hills AONB

Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership draft position statement Ash Dieback – Conserving and Managing Ash Trees and Woodlands in the Shropshire Hills AONB

Ash dieback is a disease caused by the fungal pathogen *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, since 2012 it has been spreading across the in the UK and its impact is now accelerating in the Shropshire Hills AONB. This is important because ash is a very significant landscape tree and because it supports valuable wildlife, both at a woodland scale and as an individual tree.

Whilst the long-term impact of dieback on our ash trees is likely to be devastating, its outcome is still uncertain. In the Shropshire Hills AONB we wish to limit the impact of dieback by promoting sensitive management to safeguard remaining ash trees and woodlands.

Ash in Woodlands:

Due to the high numbers of ash/proximity in woodlands, the increased prevalence of fungal spores, reduced air movement and the ever-present threat of climate change, ash woodlands will be increasingly susceptible to dieback. Nevertheless, even in severely affected woodlands, healthy or disease resistant ash may persist, and it is important that these trees are identified and preserved as genetic resource, to in time, allow our ash woodlands to recover. Preference is to undertake a selective/precautionary approach to disease management rather than undertake wholesale removal of ash in a woodland (which has other undesirable consequences).

Field, boundary and urban trees:

Individual trees will be susceptible to dieback; roadside trees, urban trees or trees alongside footpaths and bridleways may pose a safety risk. Management to safeguard the public should be priority, but where there is no risk to the public (e.g. hedgerow or field trees), the retention of the tree as standing deadwood may be an option for wildlife habitat reasons.

How to identify dieback:

There are a variety of on-line resources with images

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

https://www.observatree.org.uk/media/1222/15_0043_one-off-literature-observatree-pest-disease-field-guides-chalara_wip16.pdf

Responsibility vs Risk:

The owner of land where a tree stands is responsible for the safety of the public who could be affected by a falling tree. Whilst ensuring public safety is paramount, the overall risk to the public from falling trees is extremely low, and the National Tree Safety Group publication "The Common Sense Risk Management of Trees"

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/7073/FCMS025.pdf> provides guidance on risk assessment.

Getting Consent:

Unless the trees are dead or pose a real and immediate danger a felling licence may be required prior to tree removal. From November 2021, in certain circumstances, in response to increasing outbreaks and public safety concerns a simplified application process applies. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-licence-when-you-need-to-apply>

If ash dieback affects SSSI woodland, permission should also be sought from Natural England both for felling and for restocking.

For individual ash trees in a Village or Town Conservation Area or for trees with a Tree Protection Order (TPO) Shropshire Council should be consulted prior to undertaking any management.

In all cases wildlife surveys should be undertaken to assess for the presence of protected species such as bats and dormice and relevant permissions obtained before trees are felled or managed.

Restocking/Replanting:

Whilst no one tree can replace ash, consider replanting a variety of tree species, this may help approximate the ecological gap the loss of ash of trees will create. Alternatively, woodland recovery by natural regeneration may be considered (or supplemented by planting), either will help to maintain more resilient woodlands.

Funding:

Countryside Stewardship Woodland Tree Health Grant:

Capital grant for farmers and land managers to restock or improve woodland after tree health problems <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-tree-health-grant-countryside-stewardship>

Defra Tree Health Pilot (Shropshire Hills AONB only):

Expands on support already available through the Countryside Stewardship woodland tree health grant. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-health-pilot-scheme>

For more information:

https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/7277/7894_New_FC_Chalara_leaflet_dft9.pdf
<https://treecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Tree-Council-Ash-dieback-tree-owners-guide-FINAL.pdf>

This page is intentionally left blank



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 nd March 2022	<u>Item</u> 8
---	-----------------------------

SHROPSHIRE DRAFT DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022 - 2025

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

Summary

This paper updates members on the draft Shropshire Destination Management Plan which has recently been prepared by consultants following stakeholder consultations.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the production of the draft Plan and the summary presented here and to offer comments.

Background

The Shropshire Destination Management Plan is the blueprint for how the county intends to manage its visitor economy between 2022 and 2025. Shropshire has not had a whole county tourism plan for some years. Under the leadership of Shropshire Council, a new partnership is emerging comprising people and organisations from across the public and private sectors with a stake in future success. Collectively, this partnership has identified priorities and related actions that will begin to transform Shropshire as a visitor destination.

The tourism sector has been hit hard by the Covid pandemic, and Shropshire's recovery plan aims to support the sector to thrive, promote partnerships with related sectors, particularly culture and landscape management, to become a credible regional player on tourism initiatives as part of the West Midlands and the Marches LEP area, and ensure that Shropshire can take advantage of future funding opportunities at the national level.

The draft Destination Management Plan has been influenced by county strategies including the Economic Growth Strategy, Cultural Strategy, Great Outdoors Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, and also by the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

The vision set out is *"To create a welcoming and sustainable visitor economy that celebrates the natural beauty of our landscape and its role in health and wellbeing, that promotes the contribution of Shropshire in the history of world-changing ideas, that offers unique towns and villages with a refreshing independence of spirit and that safeguards all these assets for generations to come."*

Principles of Partnership and Sustainability will underpin the plan, and development of the sector will aim to balance the needs of the Visitor, the Environment, Residents and Businesses.

Eight interdependent priorities have been identified as important for Shropshire’s future success:

1. Develop a strong evidence base to support future decision making
2. Improve digital infrastructure for tourism businesses
3. Increase the appeal of the county for visiting families
4. Adjust the ratio between day and staying visitors from 90:10 to 80:20
5. Become an exemplar destination for sustainable tourism
6. Adopt an attract and disperse approach to regional and national marketing.
7. Increase Shropshire’s reputation for quality and excellence through product development
8. Build a reputation for delivering high service standards and a warm visitor welcome

Following further consultation with relevant stakeholders (including a meeting on 4th March) the Plan will be finalised and then implemented by partners. It will be a reference document for future funding and a basis for bids into government programmes and can be used by developers and tourism businesses to shape their investment. The list of priorities and actions is intentionally short so that success can be easily tracked and attributed. The plan will be reviewed in Autumn 2023.

The AONB Partnership team has been closely involved especially through Nigel McDonald our Sustainable Tourism Officer. The good recognition of the AONB and the landscape and environment of Shropshire more generally is welcomed, along with the strong adoption of sustainable tourism principles through the Plan.

<p>List of Background Papers None</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>
<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.</p>
<p>Appendices None</p>