

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Terms of Reference

(Draft at August 2018 developed by AONB Partnership Management Board)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is the body responsible for coordinating the management of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

1.2 The Partnership has the formal status of a 'Joint Advisory Committee' under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to the two local authorities of Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.

1.3 The purposes of the national AONB designation are as follows:

- The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Natural beauty goes well beyond scenic and aesthetic value. The natural beauty of an AONB is to do with the relationship between people and place. It encompasses everything – 'natural and human' – that makes an area distinctive. It includes the area's geology and landform, its climate and soils, its wildlife and ecology. It includes the rich history of human settlement and land use over the centuries, its archaeology and buildings, its cultural associations, and the people who live in it, past and present.

[AONB Management Plan Specimen text, NAAONB 2018]

- In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves, conserve and enhance the environment.
- Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

(Countryside Agency, 2001)

1.4 Local authorities have a legal obligation under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 to prepare and review a Management Plan for the AONB, and to 'act jointly' in doing this. The AONB Partnership is the body formed principally to fulfil this requirement and includes a substantially wider membership in order to engage a range of relevant interests and expertise in the management of the area.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of the AONB Partnership

- 2.1 The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership plays three main roles regarding the AONB:
- To promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, character and landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB as a local, regional and national asset.
 - To promote compatible social, environmental, economic development and the wellbeing of constituent communities.
 - In pursuit of these ends, to prepare, monitor and review the statutory Management Plan for the AONB and to coordinate its implementation.
- 2.2 In order to perform the above roles and responsibilities the Partnership will lead the review of the statutory Management Plan for the AONB every five years. This Plan will be formally approved by each individual local authority and will, as required in the CRoW Act 2000, 'formulate their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it'.
- 2.3 In addition, the Partnership will co-ordinate and facilitate the implementation of the Management Plan, and will monitor progress in achieving its objectives, policies and actions.
- 2.4 The Partnership will champion the interests of and vision for, the Shropshire Hills AONB, as contained in the statutory Management Plan, and promote a coherent and strong identity for the area.
- 2.5 The Partnership will add value to the role of local authorities as planning authorities for the AONB, especially by contributing to the development of planning policy and guidance, and by providing comments on significant development proposals and planning applications. Detailed roles and procedures for the AONB Partnership's involvement in planning are set out in a formal Planning Protocol with the local authorities.
- 2.6 The Partnership will seek to secure resources required for effective management of the AONB, including external funds to assist in delivering management activities and projects.
- 2.7 The Partnership will ensure that public bodies fulfil their duty under S85 of the CRoW Act to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in the exercise and performance of their functions.
- 2.8 The Partnership will monitor the condition of the AONB and progress with Management Plan implementation and will publish an annual review of progress and make recommendations to local authorities as appropriate.
- 2.9 The Partnership will set up a procedural document and will periodically review its governance to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of the Partnership will consist of a maximum of 45 people comprising the following:

- Four elected Members appointed by Shropshire Council (representatives should be relevant portfolio holders or local division members);
- One elected member appointed by Telford and Wrekin Council (the representative should be a relevant portfolio holder or local ward member);
- Elected members of parish or town councils within or partly within the AONB;
- Representatives of other statutory bodies;
- Representatives appointed by non-statutory or voluntary organisations;
- Individual members.

The Partnership will have responsibility for determining the number of members from each representative group (excluding local authority members) and all of the above will have full voting rights.

APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Signed

Date

Position

on behalf of SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Signed

Date

Position

on behalf of TELFORD AND WREKIN COUNCIL