



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 12 th July 2022	<u>Item</u> 5
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LIKELY ONE YEAR DELAY TO AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

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Summary

This paper informs members of a likely national move to delay the review of the AONB Management Plans by a year in order to align better with strategic plans and programmes at a national level.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to support the proposed delay, subject to confirmation from Defra of this opportunity.

Background

Discussion at a national level has highlighted that there is merit in a delay to the production of AONB and National Park Management Plans which are due for review by March 2024 until there is greater certainty over matters like the proposed reforms arising from the Government's response to the Landscapes Review, the proposed Landscape Strategy, and the publication of refreshed Management Plan Guidance by Natural England.

Defra have recently stated the following:

"We are writing to inform you that Defra is exploring a proposal to offer some Management Planning Partnerships an option to delay the publication of upcoming Management Plans.

Defra has already begun work to implement non-legislative reforms to management planning and plan for the publication of ambitious new outcomes for Protected Landscapes and the publication of new Management Plan guidance early next year.

We recognize the scale and significant implications of these reforms for management planning. During the government's consultation on the Landscapes Review Response, which ended on 9 April, we also listened carefully to those of you who voiced support for a more flexible and less prescriptive approach to management planning. We also received feedback that Management Planning Partnerships would like time to digest reforms and updated guidance and embed them into new Management Plans.

Defra is currently looking at the feasibility and legal implications of a voluntary option to delay to account for this. We are looking into this primarily for those Management Plan Partnerships who are due to publish their Management Plans in 2023 or 2024. We expect those who have recently published or are due to publish management plans in the near future to be unaffected. The final decision on this delay will be subject to legal and ministerial advice. We are aiming to issue official communications confirming this decision within the coming weeks.

We are grateful for all the work you are doing to prepare and implement Management Plans and thank you for your patience and understanding."

Before the final decision is made on deferment it will be advisable to check with the local planning authorities that the Management Plan and policies within it will continue to be a material planning consideration until the new Plan is in place.

List of Background Papers Government guidance - Areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs): designation and management https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management
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