

Community Governance Group
Somerset County Council
County Hall
Taunton, TA1 4DY



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Friday 7 May 2010

at

2.15pm

in the

Crowcombe Hall, Crowcombe

To: The Members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

Julian Gale
Group Manager, Community Governance
30 April, 2010

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Norman Tottle (Community Governance) on tel (01823) 355571, fax (01823) 355529 or email. natottle@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on the last page.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

AGENDA

Agenda Item No.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest** – an opportunity for members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting.
3. **Accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2010** (copy appended) **and to consider any matters arising.**
4. **Public Question Time** – The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting, or present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit.
5. **Report of the AONB Manager (Paper A)**
6. **Development Officer Report (Paper B)**
7. **Finance Report (Paper C)**
8. **Sustainable Development Fund Report (Paper D)**
9. **Landscape Planning Officer Report (Paper E)**
10. **Date of next meeting** – Friday 23 July 2010
11. **Any Other Business of Urgency**

Note : Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service, The Quantock Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ. Tel No 01823 451884 or e-mail : quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk

THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Norman Tottle – tel: (01823) 355571, fax (01823) 355529 or email. natottle@somerset.gov.uk

2. Notes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Norman Tottle – tel: (01823) 355571, fax (01823) 355529 or email natottle@somerset.gov.uk

3. Public Question Time

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about **any matter on the Committee's agenda**. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. **The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.**

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Norman Tottle, the Committee Administrator, **before the meeting**.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.

Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

4. Substitutions

Committee members are able to appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.

(26 February 2010)

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held in the Village Hall, Bicknoller, on Friday 26 February 2010 at 2.15pm.

Present

Somerset County Council Chairman)	Mr A H Trollope-Bellew () Mr J Wilkins
Sedgemoor District Council	Mr D W Joslin Mr J Swayne Mr A Bradford
Taunton Deane Borough Council	Dr C Guerrier Mr N Stuart-Thorn
West Somerset Council	Mr S Dowding (Subst) Mr T Taylor
Parish Representatives	Mr T Ayre Mr P Hall (Subst) Mrs C Parsons
Natural England	Mr S Marston
CLBA	Mr H Warmington
Friends of Quantock	Mrs L Kelly
Forestry Commission	Mr N Salter
Quantock Commoners Association	Mrs D Salvidge

Also Present

Mr A Rich (Nether Stowey PC), Ms N Penn (Field Studies Council), Mr D Venner (Bicknoller PC), Mr A Hughes (Friends of Quantock), Mrs M White (Sedgemoor Bridleways Assoc), Mrs J Sansom (West Quantoxhead PC).

Apologies were received from Mr J Edney (SCC), Mr H Davies (WSC), Mr C Morgan (WSC), Mr N Cavill (TDBC), Mr J Edwards (Parish Rep), Mr R Conway (SLAF), Mr B James (SCC- Officer), Mrs J Burton (SDC- Officer), Mrs A Lamplough (WSC – Officer) Dr P Radford (Somerset Archaeological & NH Society) and Mr J Clarke (Kingston St Mary PC).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

22. The Chairman declared personal and prejudicial interests in respect of Clavus Cottage, Triscombe and Middle Halsway Farm, Crowcombe which were listed in paragraph 3.1 of the report of Landscape Planning Officer - agenda item no 7. If there was any discussion on these items he would leave the room.

MINUTES

23. (1) The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record subject to amendments to Minute 21 suggested by Mr J Swayne which were agreed.

Matters arising

Minute 13 (3) – Quantock Greenway

(2) Tim Russell reported that the flooding problem in the vicinity of the Windmill Hotel was being dealt with by Rights of Way and that some work appeared to have been done as fresh hardcore had been put down.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

24. Mr Paul Partington, Open Spaces Society Local Correspondent, asked a question about the cost to the taxpayer of the damage and time of the Rangers and the Police by the unlawful use of motor propelled vehicles on public rights of way and the unlawful removal of signs within the AONB. It was explained that Mr Partington would have to ask the Chief Constable direct for the answers relating to the costs and time of the Police, but that for the AONB service it was estimated that about 1 day a month was taken up with RoW matters not including patrolling time. A written response would be sent to Mr Partington by the AONB Manager concerning the costs and time of the AONB Service. The question relating to the cost of putting right the damage caused to rights of way was a matter to be answered by the Rights of Way Group at County Hall. The Chairman suggested that Mr Partington e-mail Mr Barry James the Group Manager asking for the information.

PATHWATCH

25. (1) The JAC received a talk by PC's Roger Joliffe and Dave Sheppard about "Pathwatch" a police initiative to help deal with illegal off-road driving. The initiative was very similar to the Sussex Pathwatch scheme

introduced some years ago and had followed discussion between the Chief Constable, the NFU and other bodies. The Police were seeking help from a number of bodies to promote the initiative through web-site links, posters, leaflets etc. Chris Edwards agreed that a web-link would be put on the AONB web-site. PC's Joliffe and Sheppard responded to a number of questions from JAC members concerning legal definitions of routes, untaxed vehicles and legal exceptions.

REPORT OF THE AONB MANAGER

26. (1) The JAC considered the report of the AONB Manager on the AONB Service, Management Plan Delivery, Officers Working Group and JAC Annual Event.

(2) The notes produced by Andy Harris following the Phytopthera (Sudden Oak Death) event held at crowcombe Church House on 18 November 2009 would be circulated to JAC members. Members debated the issues concerning the partnership Agreement and Core Funding contained in paragraph 3 of the report but the general consensus was that in the likelihood of the serious funding issues that Authorities are likely to have in the future everyone would do the best they can in terms of AONB funding. The date for the JAC Annual Event in June would be rearranged and members would be notified by Chris Edwards of the alternative date.

(3) The JAC agreed :-

- To support the Gantt chart monitoring mechanism described in Section 2.2 of the report;
- To support the Annual Event arrangements described in Section 4 of the report subject to another suitable date being found; and
- To note the remainder of the report.

LANDSCAPE PLANNING OFFICER REPORT

27. (1) The JAC considered the report of the Landscape Planning officer which was presented by Chris Edwards. The report contained items on Hinckley Point C, Local development Frameworks, Planning Application Consultations , Guidance for Horse Keeping in protected landscapes and Website information.

(2) Mr Taylor asked questions concerning planning applications where comments had been submitted to the Local Planning Authorities by the AONB Service and that it would be helpful if those Local Authority JAC members could be kept informed about the comments submitted. Chris Edwards said that he would look into appropriate mechanisms whereby this could be done. The remainder of the report was noted.

RANGERS REPORT

28. (1) The JAC considered the report of the Rangers' for the period August 2009 to January 2010. Tim Russell gave a presentation using photographs to illustrate the main issues that had arisen during this period. Invitations would be sent to JAC members for the Tick Borne Diseases Conference to be held at Halsway Manor on 4 May. If there were sufficient places available representatives from parish Councils would be able to attend.

(2) Mrs J Sanson asked a question about Rhododendron clearance at Vinnicombe concerning the disposal of plant material and the reseeded of the area. Tim Russell responded that this would be a matter for the National Trust as landowner. The Chairman asked Tim Russell to speak to Mrs Sansom after the meeting about this. The report was noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29. Confirmed as Friday 7 May at 2.15pm.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30. MR Swayne raised two matters concerning the use of the Probation Service workforce to undertake work/projects at reasonable daily rates and the Rural Watch initiative where landowners/farmers can have equipment marked and photographed to be kept on a national database. Further details could be obtained from Mr Swayne at john.swayne@sedgemoor.gov.uk or tel 01278 662188.

(The meeting closed at 4.07 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Qhjac.mins.26.2.10

REPORT OF THE AONB MANAGER**1 AONB Service**

1.1 An opportunity recently arose for those with appropriate experience to apply on a secondment basis to take over the post of Environmental Resources Group Manager at County Hall – Alyn Jones the current Group Manager has such a key role in the Hinkley Point planning process that he will be addressing energy development issues full-time until the end of the financial year. This Group Manager post is an interesting role - very relevant to the AONB management - with responsibility for projects and officers covering the areas of biodiversity, countryside/landscape, coast, climate change, sustainable development and forward planning for minerals and waste.

Interested in the post I concluded that if I applied and was successful there would be benefits to be accrued to myself, team members, the JAC and the AONB from this opportunity for the AONB Manager role to be refreshed with a different postholder, while on my return I could bring new and different perspectives, contacts and understanding to the job.

1.2 As a matter of urgency to the County Council this has necessarily been processed very quickly and having individually discussed with members of the AONB Team and my current line manager how we might address the opportunities and challenges for AONB management that could arise, I applied for and have been offered the post, which lasts until March 31st 2011. The secondment was discussed at the recent Officers Working Group meeting of the 22nd April and that group is recommending that the JAC supports these temporary changes, the JAC Chairman was then consulted and has given JAC support. I have now accepted the position and will start Monday 17th, which makes this my last JAC meeting for a while.

1.3 Before taking on this secondment it was important to have a plan for AONB management in my absence and I am glad to say that it was pretty straightforward to develop a simple revised structure to cover this. Congratulations to our Development Officer Iain Porter who will be acting AONB Manager while I am seconded, taking on the core elements of the role, while retaining

some of the Development Officer tasks for which he currently has responsibility.

Our Annual Work Programme for this year allocated a very significant amount of my time to developing a comprehensive Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan for the areas of AONB interest, delivering *Action Point CE1: Prepare the AONB for the impacts and opportunities of climate change*. This work can be very effectively achieved through the temporary employment of a specialist in this work, or specialist consultants. Similarly we had identified at least one third of Iain's work this year to develop the phase 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnerships Fund, if this is supported, giving significant financial stability to the delivery of the Management Plan. This is a piece of work which can again be effectively achieved by temporary contract to a specialist in this field. In my new post I will continue to look after the interests of the AONB in respect of some elements of the work I currently do such as Regional/County level biodiversity liaison and membership of partner organisation committees/initiatives.

Iain and I have discussed his new role in detail breaking the different aspects of the work into days per year and ensuring that through the above changes the overall total is manageable. To keep me in touch with developments and give an additional element of support to Iain I will be returning to Fyne Court for an update with Iain once a month, line management will be carried out by Barry James of Somerset County Council. I have no doubt that Iain will do a superb job as Manager of the AONB Service while gaining valuable experience.

1.4 JAC members may be aware that I have worked with AONB team for this committee for over twenty years, and together we have shaped the process by which this "diamond in the landscape" is protected, enhanced and enjoyed for the benefit of wildlife and people alike. Despite the temporary nature of this change, it is genuinely difficult to leave Fyne Court and the Quantocks when spring is so beautifully in the air and the team is working so well together, but I suspect I will quickly be absorbed by the new challenges at County Hall. I hope this works out well for all parties and that you can all support this change, also that at the end of the financial year I can be welcomed back to the team at Fyne Court with open arms - and our traditional greeting of cake.

1.5 Works to Fyne Court by the National Trust are progressing well with the library meeting room now repointed and decorated making a very useful and attractive location for medium sized meetings. The National Trust have accepted the recommendations of the acoustic assessment report carried out for the Music Room (main hall) by SCC's Scientific Services. I have been investigating getting the necessary works done in this room and the National Trust have agreed to fund this work. There is now a National Trust Cafe in the building next to our office serving among other things wonderful cakes, highly recommended cream teas and excellent coffee. Further works have been carried out to the entrance of Fyne Court and signage around the site.

1.6 The Annual Event is now firmly set for Wednesday 16th of June (not the 21st which was discussed at the last JAC) and will be catered by the Fyne Court Cafe, invitations will be sent out in due course (I hope to receive one myself). The Tick Conference will have taken place at Halsway Manor by the time of this meeting, it is looking like a very interesting event and numerous places have been taken by the medical profession, as the JAC intended. Thanks go to Senior Ranger Tim Russell for setting that one up.

1.7 Having had prior discussion we have received a proposal to create an AONB Parish Network from Peter Hall of Broomfield Parish Council. Essentially the aim of this proposal is to create a single on-line Quantock Hills AONB portal where Parish representatives and the AONB Service can provide support and information to each other and collaborate on topics connected to the management of the AONB. Peter is in a position to set-up this network very cost-effectively (using free open-source software) as he has extensive professional experience of doing this.

Peter's proposal is comprehensive and stresses that this Network is intended to act as an informal support to the formal decision making structures for the AONB, working across boundaries, for example District Council boundaries. It is not intended to replace or undermine any of the existing mechanisms, and JAC Parish representatives will be invited to join the network and participate. It will operate under the sponsorship of the AONB Service Manager, who will have ultimate responsibility for its operation, day-to-day monitoring and communications through the network will be

managed for the AONB by the Communications Officer who has been working with Peter to develop this proposal.

The proposal contains a great deal more information and detail, a copy can be provided by the AONB Office on request. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance community liaison in an informal way while working with voluntary expertise from within the AONB and further developing cross-AONB communications. It will work on the basis of each parish providing a representative who is familiar with this style of e-communications (or happy to learn), has an interest in our local environment and is happy to liaise with the parish council, from the AONB side Anna would pass on specific questions to relevant team members and put information on the network as requested.

2 Management Plan Delivery

2.1 At the time of writing (a very busy time) I am completing some final discussions on project partner contributions, the financial climate has made confirming commitment from partners increasingly difficult. The final Delivery Plan is with the designers who are producing the plan in PDF format, however this work is currently on hold. I hope to have the Plan available on our website by the time of the meeting.

2.2 The Gantt chart showing planned Action Point Delivery has been further developed to differentiate between project and ongoing delivery. At the recent Officer Working Group further development to indicate project partners was requested and will be added when time allows.

2.3 Iain is bringing a report to this meeting on the potential for a Landscape Partnership bid to deliver a range of Management Plan Actions with a recommendation from the Officers Working Group that this exciting opportunity is taken forward.

3 Officers Working Group(OWG), Partnership Agreement and Core Funding

3.1 At the recent OWG meeting of Thursday 11th February attendees were: Steve Marston (NE, OWG Chairman), Nick Salter (FC), Ian Clark (TDBC), Ian Porter (AONB), Katy Coate (AONB), and Chris Edwards (AONB). Apologies were received from and Anthony Trollope-Bellew (JAC) and Angela Lamplough (WSC).

3.2 The main items discussed at this meeting were Staffing, Delivery Plan, Partnership Agreement, Landscape Partnership Bid, and the Mendip Hills AONB Governance Review. Key points are shown below:

- AONB Development Officer confirmed interested has been registered regarding the Landscape Partnership Bid. Will chase response from Heritage Lottery Fund professional staff and bring a proposal to the May JAC.
- AONB Manager pointed out that the revised staffing situation may lend itself to developing a bid and the allocation of funds to specifically focus on this bid.
- The need for a distinctive theme was discussed and decided to be important for the bid to stand out over other AONB's who are known to be pursuing LPB too. Inspirational aspects and uniqueness of QH and Romantic Poets/Coleridge theme to be developed.
- All officers present agreed report including the identification of risks to go to the JAC with the recommendation to pursue a LPB and move to the next stage of application.
- Partnership agreement – deadline for signing been extended by NE to end of June 2010 but funding will be conditional upon it being signed by this date or a letter from partners confirming their intent to sign. Current confirmed signatories are Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Forestry Commission.
- Delivery Plan – looking into web based feedback, to be continued till next meet. Final draft with printers and will be available very soon
- Local Nature Reserve Cothelstone Hill – Awaiting the Management Plan to be drawn up, then will be moving this forward.
- All partners present were happy for AONB Manager to accept secondment and for Development Officer to fill the role of AONB Manager on a temporary basis, providing the JAC approve it. These officers to meet on Monday 26th April to break down the roles of Manager and Development Officer for the period and develop appropriate work programme.
- Sedgemoor DC reported that the new head of services, Teresa Harvey, is reassessing all contributions and may be returned to the grant panel.

- Natural England reported that the current version of the agreement including the Forestry Commission rewording was with their legal department.
- AONB Manager to confirm with West Somerset Council its position. Natural England happy to attend a meeting with WSC if desired.
- Natural England commented that it was important to stress to the next JAC the risk to funding of the AONB Partnership if all partners do not sign the agreement.
- Natural England reported the Mendip JAC equivalent will be meeting more regularly 3 times a year and any major decisions will be made by them with discussion and recommendations coming from their equivalent OWG.
- Somerset CC commented that the feel of the arrangement with the Quantock Hills OWG and JAC was very healthy and working well.
- Natural England enquired the constitution required a review/assessment? In light of current busy situation officers felt that it was best to leave for now but to re-assess at a later date.
- AONB Manager suggested the JAC may be a little local Councillor heavy (currently 3 per authority, Mendip AONB will only have 1 per authority). Again it was decided to re-assess at a later date.
- Those present agreed to recommend the Vice Chairman of the JAC attending the OWG when JAC Chairman unavailable.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The JAC is recommended to:

- **Support the Manager secondment arrangements described in sections 1.1 to 1.4**
- **Support the Parish Network development proposed in section 1.7**
- **Agree JAC Vice-Chairman deputise at Officers Working Group if Chairman unavailable**

CHRIS EDWARDS
 QUANTOCK HILLS AONB MANAGER
 2010

April

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer

07 May 2010

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER REPORT

This report covers the reporting period November 2009 – March 2010.

1. Development Officer Resource.

- a. Development Officer time has been used to work on existing projects, manage the SDF, manage 3 staff posts, assist with development of the Delivery Plan and develop partnership funding bids, notably the Landscape Partnership Bid. Somerset County Council, our host authority, has from 1st April transferred all financial procedures to a new electronic based system called SAP. Unfortunately this system has had some teething issues which has meant resource being re-directed.
- b. The July 2010 Rangers Report will detail the project work (as well as their core tasks) undertaken by the Rangers during this reporting period on the following project
 - i. Habitats & Biodiversity (Ranger, Andy Harris)
 - ii. Visitor & Interpretation Management (Ranger, Andy Harris)
 - iii. Integrated Access (Senior Ranger, Tim Russell)

2. Volunteer Coordinator.

- a. Owen Jones has been in post as Volunteer Coordinator since the beginning of February 2010. The post is a part-time fixed term post operating on 22 hours per week until the end of January 2011. The short term aims for the post are listed below (Table 1) with progress noted. Owen has greatly increased the communication between the National Trust and ourselves which has brought great benefits in a short space of time.
- b. The long term objectives of integrating working with volunteers more closely with other AONB roles has started and Owen is developing recommendations which will come the JAC later this year.

Table 1.

Action	Progress
Meet with Ben (NT) and go on a number of NT tasks to meet with a range of volunteers.	Attended 3 NT tasks & meets with Ben on weekly basis
Organise with coffee morning / drop in session as an opportunity to meet the volunteers – Need to link into NT task?	Dropped as task after attending NT tasks
Announcement into Volunteer newsletter.	Done
Work with Tim and Andy on the 3 month task programme	Done
Attend all AONB volunteer tasks	Done

Organise training event for swaling working with Andy – 13 th January so may not happen	Swaling training
Organise training event for visitor counter monitoring with Iain	This is currently in progress. The training has been postponed as there has been higher priority training for the volunteers.
Organise with Andy and Nigel a trip for late spring / early summer - tentative	Owen will be organising summer volunteer social for Quantock Countryside Volunteers and Long Eared Owls volunteers

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The JAC notes the report.

3. Project Development – Landscape Partnership Bid

- The Quantock Hills AONB Service is tasked by the Quantock Hills AONB Partnership (Joint Advisory Committee) to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Quantock Hills. In order to achieve this, the AONB Service on behalf of the Partnership produces a 5 yearly Management Plan that contains the vision for the Quantock Hills and a number of policies and actions that will achieve these policies.
- There are 69 action points contained within the 2009 – 2014 Management Plan of which 33 will be achieved in part or fully through project delivery.
- There are significant pressures on national and local funding at present and into the foreseeable future which will impact on the AONB Services ability to deliver the Management Plan. It has to be recognised that the status quo is not sustainable and that the AONB Service has to investigate new and innovative funding sources. One such source is Landscape Partnership, a large fund from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- This paper provides information on the Landscape Partnership (sometimes referred to as LP in this document) and explores the implications if the AONB Service were to take forward an application to this fund.

4. What is Landscape Partnership?

- Landscape Partnership is a funding programme from the Lottery Heritage Fund. It is a funding pot offering grant of between £250,000 and £2 million for partnership of local, regional and national interests which aim to conserve areas of distinct landscape character.
- A Landscape Partnership is expected to deliver across the four programme outcomes:
 - Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character
 - Increasing community participation in local heritage

- iii. Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage
- iv. Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills
- c. The programme requires match funding which is stepped. For Landscape Partnership Grants below £1 million we will be required to provide 10% match funding, for grants over £1 million we would need to provide at least 25%.
- d. The HLF are looking for a real impact from any Landscape Partnership scheme and schemes will have to be between 20 and 200 km².
- e. There are set application rounds with Landscape Partnership. The application process is in two stages and the process from start to finish can take up to 2 ½ years. The indicative timeline is:

Table 2: Landscape Partnership – Indicative timeline.

Stage	When	Detail
Pre Application	Anytime	Basic information to assess whether your idea meets the criteria of Landscape Partnership
First-round application	November	Completion of a Landscape Character Assessment and detailed development of the Landscape Partnership Bid. Assessed and a decision by HLF trustees in April
Development Phase	18 mths max	The development phase can last up to 18 months from being informed of the success of the first-round application. In this phase we will develop a Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP).
Second-round application	When LCAP complete	Evaluation of LCAP will take four months.

5. A Quantock Landscape Partnership?

- a. The Quantock Hills AONB Service is looking at Landscape Partnership needed to assess whether there was sufficient demand in projects and work to consider the Landscape Partnership Bid. An initial scoping exercise was conducted which has not at this time been widely consulted on. The JAC are reminded to treat this information as draft in the knowledge that it will change as it is further developed.
- b. Title: inspirational Quantocks
- c. Aims:
 - i. To enhance landscape value of the farmed landscape of the Quantock Hills
 - ii. To promote the importance of the Quantock Hills in the birth of the romantic poet movement and re-engage people with the inspirational value of the Quantock Hills
 - iii. provide for a sustainable economy based on high landscape value
 - iv. Increase the knowledge of the historic importance of the farmed landscape
 - v. Increase community ownership and participation in the direction and management of the nationally important landscape

- d. Examples of potential projects (Appendix 1). These are potential projects which will help achieve the actions contained within the Quantock Hills Management Plan. The project list will expand and change as other project ideas are developed by other partners.
- e. At this stage we feel that the Quantock Hills Partnership would be the ideal vehicle to further develop and lead the Landscape Partnership. There is significant local and regional input with plenty of scope for community engagement. As the bid develops it may become apparent that a new partnership will need to be developed to take account of project partners and delivery.
- f. The indicative timeline for the Quantock Landscape Partnership bid (Appendix 2) is based on a recommendation by the JAC at today's meeting. It is subject to change, especially staff resource at the Quantock Hills AONB Service. The timeline is a best case scenario and may slip without dedicated resource. Essential the delivery phase will run from 2013 – 2018.
- g. Costs of Scheme. Based on prelim costings the Landscape Partnership Bid will cost £890,000. This includes development grant and delivery of the Landscape Partnership. We would be looking for £790,000 From HLF and therefore there will be a requirement for £100,000 (11%) match funding.
- h. Match Funding. Match funding will need to be identified and committed by the first-round application. There is an issue when talking to potential partners about committing match funding so far into the future, especially in light local authority funding at present. The Landscape Partnership may have to identify other innovative fund raising avenues to meet match funding requirement.

6. Landscape Partnership – Scoping

- a. A scoping paper was presented to the Officer Working Group on 22 April 2010. A copy of the full scoping report can be requested from the Development Officer. This section presents a summary of the scoping report and the outcome of the discussion of the OWG.
- b. Options. The options look at project delivery for the 2009 – 2014 Management Plan specifically related to Landscape Partnership. Other wider options, such as the setting up of a Delivery Trust, are not considered at this stage.

Table 5: Options

Option	Comments
Do nothing (1)	No project delivery, Management Plan not delivered and statutory undertaking delivered only
Look to achieve delivery through partners (2)	The AONB Service looks to draw in other organisations to deliver it's objectives
Pursue smaller external funding pots (3)	The AONB Service will apply for smaller pots of funding to deliver its objectives. Delivery will be by the AONB Service
Create specific project partnerships (4)	Creation of other project partnerships between the AONB Service and other organisations. The partnership will be large and look to undertake a number of projects under one umbrella.

Pursue Landscape Partnership funding (5)	Creation of a new partnership to deliver a whole raft of projects over a 5-year timescale that will achieve the objectives of the AONB Partnership.
--	---

- c. Advantage / Disadvantages of options. There needs to be consideration of the advantages / disadvantages of each of the identified options. There will be advantages and disadvantages to any option taken forward. Discussion at the OWG looked at the various options and assessed these against the risks

Table 6: Options Advantage / Disadvantage appraisal.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Do nothing (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff resource available to pursue other options, if cuts do not reduce current AONB Service staff levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Service will be reactive rather than proactive to any further funding cuts lack of funding will equal reduction in delivery Lack of commitment on partners will make AONB Service 'soft target' for future funding cuts Target (delivery of Management Plan 2009 – 2014) will not be achieved.
Look to achieve delivery through partners (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery achievable with reduced AONB resource Greater partnership buy-in and ownership of Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliance on partners in light of their reducing budgets may lead to non-delivery Lack of control over delivery could result in projects not achieving AONB objectives
Pursue smaller external funding pots (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater flexibility Not reliant on one option Fits ideally with tailored rolling 3-year project plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to find other match funding Dependant on funding available – may not be for projects we wish to pursue Restricted by existing resources
Create specific project partnerships (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less resource requirement on AONB Service Partnership approach will engender partners 'ownership' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependant upon funding Use of AONB staff resource in management of another partnership
Pursue Landscape Partnership funding (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of the 33 Action Points could be partially or wholly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very resource heavy. Development Officer post will be heavily

	<p>achieved through LP funding in a joined up approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will tie in other delivery partners in leading on some of the projects • Will bring additional resources (staff, revenue costs) for life of LP 	<p>involved for at least 18 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No guarantee of success • Will not be able to explore other funding options • Will commit all AONB match funding (project, SDF) • Other match funding becoming scarce
--	---	---

7. A Way forward.

- a. After discussion based on the scoping paper presented to the OWG, and an assessment of the risks associated with taking forward a Landscape Partnership bid (Appendix 3: Risk Assessment) the recommendation from the OWG to the JAC is that option 5 is taken forward. The OWG feel that the benefits of pursuing a Landscape Partnership Bid outweigh the potential disadvantages.
- b. Originally the development of a Landscape Partnership bid would have formed a major objective of the Development Officer work plan (up to 50% of staff resource for the next 18 months). With the recent changes in AONB Service staffing identified in the AONB Managers report this is now unfeasible.
- c. To develop the Landscape Partnership Bid the OWG recommends that the AONB Service employs a specific bid development officer for a fixed term period.

Recommendation

- **The JAC endorse the OWG recommendation to take forward the Landscape Partnership Bid.**
 - **The JAC endorse the OWG recommendation to employ, on a fixed term contract, a specialist bid development officer.**
-

Appendix 1. Example of Potential Projects

Title	Brief Description	Outcomes	Cost ('000)
Quantock Community Archive	To gather information (community – historic) related and centralise this at a centre on the Quantock Hills (Fyne Court). The project would involve community engagement as these are the people who hold the information	B/C	20
Small Woodland Management for Woodfuel	Small farm woodlands a key landscape feature. Currently no management – Look to provide project which will get woodlands back into management	A	10
Quantock Beech Hedgebank Restoration	Provision of grants for restoration of key Beech Hedgebanks as identified in the LUC 2005 report	A	60
Southern Quantocks Farmland Restoration Scheme	The southern Quantocks farmland has suffered with hedgerow removal which impacts landscape and wildlife. It is known that this area is important for Bats and Dormice (both BAP species?). Project will look to restore key hedgerows for landscape and wildlife corridor purposes. Also look to grassland restoration in key landscape areas for provision of grazing – waxcap (BAP species)	A	100
Hazel for Dormice	Link existing areas of hazel coppice (link to PR07) and enhance current areas	A/E	25
Quantock Links	Create / provide link infrastructure to Taunton & Bridgwater in line with Green Infrastructure Strategy. Links to go right into urban areas, linking up with deprived estates. Can this be expanded to undertake walking to health initiatives within these deprived areas – additional partners health authority?	C	75
In the Footsteps of the Romantic Poets	A participatory arts project to widen participation and explore the effects of Climate Change on the Quantock Hills AONB. A participatory arts project in 2 parts. 1 st part is for artists to go take local community into the Quantocks to seek inspiration and then showcase this around the area. The 2 nd part is to undertake participatory arts project for those with learning difficulties based at Fyne Court exploring this hidden gem of a historic parkland landscape	B/C	40
Community Trees	A project to survey and protect veteran trees in the parkland landscape surrounding the Quantock Hills. The project will require community engagement to survey their local area and	B	15

	record veteran trees. It will then prioritise actions based on existing protection (is the landowner in HLS, is there a TPO etc).		
Quantock Follies & Features	Updating of SMR and restoration of key features (with criteria such as public access).	A/B	15
Triscombe Quarry Enhancement	To enhance Triscombe Quarry as a amenity site with educational facilities for school groups. Includes bird hide, AAA track, interpretation material etc	A/C	50
Quantock Jurassic Coast	Undertake seascape project to investigate views into the hills from the sea and also views of the important SSSI Jurassic coast at Kilve. The project would look to engage local community and visitors about what they feel is the special nature of this landscape. Work from this project will inform PR21	B	10
Young Rangers	To run a young rangers training course for young people aged 12-15. The course would look to take on 8 young people for a 2 year period who would learn about the Quantock area as well as learning skills associated with rangers. Looking at funding for 2 courses (4 years)	C	15
Quantock Shepparding Scheme	A training programme for young people to provide training on shepparding an upland flock of sheep. Quantock Common provides one of the few opportunities to manage a large flock of commons sheep (1,000+) in the south west. There is a need for training in how to manage the flock as the requirements are different from lowland sheep management. Year long course over life of LP = 4 young people trained	D	50
Quantock Skills Course	Training in beech hedgerow management, hazel coppice etc. See if this can come under other projects or if better to separate out all training elements	D	40
Fyne Court – The Electric Experience	To develop the special nature of Fyne Court as a visitor destination as well as providing a 'gateway' location for the Quantock Hills. The development of the site will provide opportunities for learning specifically about the pioneering work of Andrew Cross and the use of sustainable energy sources now. Provision of community areas in the great hall for community events etc	C	100
Quantock Monitoring Volunteers	A project to set up a volunteer group (could be expansion of existing groups) to continue legacy of wildlife monitoring on	B	10

	the Quantock Hills.		
Kilve Coast Interpretation Project	A project to increase awareness of the special nature of the Kilve coast SSSI. The project will look to provide interpretation material (may use new technologies)	C	50
Quantock Hillforts	2 phase project. Phase 1 community project to research history of hillforts (builds on EH work) and their importance in Quantock Landscape. Phase 2 to develop walks linking hillforts within Quantocks	B/C	30
Signs to Nowhere	A project to audit the Quantock area for road signs to see which can be removed to reduce visual impact on the highway landscape (important landscape for most local communities and visitors). Project will allow input from local communities as well as volunteers to carry out the auditing. 2 nd phase of project will be actual removal of unnecessary signs	A	25
Providing for Woodfuel	Links to project PR03. Look to provide training to landowners and farmers in how to manage small woodlands for wildlife and woodfuel production. Work with local contractors to provide training in supply of woodfuel material (woodchip / pellet).	D	35
Batty Quantocks	To carry out a number of bat surveys based on different habitats and to support other projects. Areas to be surveyed: (1) Southern Quantock farmland (2) Fyne Court and surrounds (3) Upland oak woods	B	15

Appendix 2: Indicative Landscape Partnership timeline. The gant chart below is an indicative timeline and an action in bold indicates an overview action, e.g. Develop 1st stage App will include such actions as agreeing roles and responsibilities, developing project engagement plans etc.

Year	2009				2010				2011				2012				2013				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4						
Draw up pre-app info																										
Initial consultation with delivery partners																										
JAC consultation																										
Enter Pre-App																										
Develop 1st stage App																										
Submit 1 st stage App																										
Outcome 1 st round																										
Employment of Development officer																										
Develop 2nd stage App																										
Develop LP Partnership																										
Submit 2 nd round app																										
Outcome 2 nd round																										
LP Management																										
LP Staff recruitment																										
Launch LP																										
Project delivery																										

Appendix 3: Landscape Partnership Risk Assessment

The risk assessment is based on the Quantock Hills AONB Service taking forward a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership. As lead officer, Iain Porter will be the risk manager in respect of the Landscape Partnership

ID	Risk	Probability (1-3) (low – high)	Severity (1-3) (low – high)	Risk score	Mitigation options
1	Lack of desire for community initiatives within the AONB	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of SDF and LARC projects appears to indicate support – accept risk • End LP if community support not forthcoming
2	Withdrawal / reduction of match funding by a delivery partner due to increasing budget pressures	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into formal SLA type arrangements with delivery partners
3	Projects developed by communities may impact adversely on AONB Objectives	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear messages, through project literature and PR, that sets out support for initiatives that do not unduly impact negatively on the landscape (including natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage) • Seek to identify, develop and disseminate good practice in relation to mitigating potentially negative impacts of projects
4	Raised expectation of delivery by AONB Service through initial consultations and pre-app	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear messages to delivery partners and communities to ensure expectations are not raised
5	LP may duplicate existing or planned activities of others involved in landscape conservation and enhancement	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure LP projects are inclusive of other delivery partners • Ensure commitment to LP by delivery partners at all stages through pre-app, stage 1 and stage 2 applications
6	Raised expectation of delivery by AONB Service towards end of LP by communities developing initiatives	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure exit strategy is in place at beginning of LP • Phase projects so lower number towards end of LP
7	Risk of high redundancy payment at end of contracts for additional LP staff	2	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside contingency budget for any redundancy
8	Unsustainable resource loss to AONB Service through bid development & delivery	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourcing development / delivery of LP • Ensure detailed staff resource management • Undertake resource audit in years 1 and 3

To: Quantock Hills JAC

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer

7 May 2010

QUANTOCK HILLS AONB FINANCE REPORT

AONB Budget 2009 / 10

- Due to the issues with SAP and it being so close to the close of the financial year (14th April 2010) the AONB finance statement is indicative. As we have not had month 12 & 13 figures we have been unable to fully breakdown finances by post. Therefore salaries have been grouped as one.
- Table 1 shows the Core expenditure. Overall there is a £11,763 deficit in the budget which was expected. This is due to additional publications work being undertaken and the recruitment of the Volunteer Coordinator. The deficit will be covered by funding carried forward from the 2008/09 financial year.
- Table 2 shows the project and SDF expenditure. There is overspend with the project budget due to miscoding (SAP errors). This is covered by funding carried forward from the 2008/09 financial year and some of the overspend was expected as invoices came in late. The expenditure for the project budget may go down as we are currently investigating payment of some invoices.
- Table 3. Summary. This is the summary income / expenditure and shows that the indicative end of year figure is £24k. The majority of this funding is allocated to forward elements of work such as the employment of the Volunteer Coordinator and various projects which span the financial years. There are also items of expenditure which do not feature in our budgets yet (such as telephone charges)

Table 1: Core Expenditure 2009 / 10.

Item	Exp	Detail
Salaries	166,205	Salaries, National Insurance, Super Annulations
Training	5,301	Individual or team training
Travel, vehicles	13,661	Mileage allowance, vehicle lease, fuel, maintenance, insurance, tax, travel costs (e.g. train tickets)
Accommodation	10,098	Rent, Rates, Water, Electricity, heating oil, office equipment, office insurance
Partnership Budget	20,003	Publications, Literature, Hospitality, Shows & Exhibitions, subscriptions, website
Partnership Running Costs	5,443	Postage, photocopier, stationary, ICT
Other costs	17,363	Health & Safety monitoring system, events, uniform and PPE, Equipment and non office materials, 3 rd party insurance
Further Commitments	18,155	We only have listings for months 1- 11 (April

		2009 – February 2010) so we have estimated costs that will be charged in March such as salaries, some invoices etc
TOTAL	256,229	

Table 2: Project / SDF Expenditure 2009 / 10.

Project	Exp
Access Improvements	1,427
DWD Car Park Enhancement	6,000
Volunteers	334
Mis Coding Error	8800
SDF Project Expenditure	54,585
TOTAL	71,146

Table 3: Summary Income / Expenditure 2009 / 10.

Income

Source	£
Natural England	207,941
Somerset County Council	34,500
West Somerset Council	21,500
Sedgemoor District Council	17,554
Forestry Commission	17,300
Taunton Deane Borough Council	16,500
External Project Income	9,000
RIA	27,816
TOTAL	352,111

Expenditure

Core	256,229
Project	16,562
SDF	54,585
TOTAL	327,376

<i>Indicative EoY Balance</i>	<i>24,735</i>
--------------------------------------	----------------------

AONB Budget 2010 /11

- **Due to suggested staffing changes and delivery a new 2010 / 11 AONB Budget will be presented at the meeting.**

Recommendation:

- **The JAC notes the report.**

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer

7 May 2010

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND REPORT

1. SDF 2009 / 10

- a. The AONB Service applied to Natural England for a combined grant for the 2009 / 10 year. This combined grant is for Core, Project and SDF budgets. Under this combined grant £60,000 was allocated to the SDF fund.
- b. Throughout the year the AONB Service received 14 applications of which 13 were approved. This allocated £54,585 Of SDF funds and the total project cost amounted to £194,952. All projects were able to deliver on time and to target. Table 1 shows the projects supported during 2009 / 10.
- c. The 'underspend' (£5,415) from the SDF was allocated to other project work undertaken by the AONB Service, largely support of the Quantock Countryside Volunteers and their tasks and a information leaflet about St Agnes Well. Under the 'single pot' arrangement from Natural England this is allowable however the AONB Service is keen to try and fully allocate the SDF.
- d. We have undertaken 2 rounds of promotion including writing to parish councils and other community groups however there has been a lower level of interest than in previous years.
- e. The SDF Panel. Currently the SDF panel is made up of three members, Nigel Stuart-Thorn (JAC vice-chair), Jane Birch (representing business interests) and Mark Anderson (representing biodiversity). The panel meets once or twice a year and other communication is via e-mail or post. This has kept the time commitment to a minimum for panel members and means that applications can be decided quickly without having to wait for the next panel meeting. This panel has worked well over the last 3 years and I am keen to keep the same model for the future. The last panel meeting was held in February 2010 and looked at progress in 2009 / 10 and also at future applications.

Table 1: Quantock Hills SDF applications 2009 / 10.

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/01	Sustainable Showers	£9,135	£4,568 (50%)
Description			
To install a shower block at Lydeard farm. The shower block used recycled materials and will allow the business to operate into colder months (shoulder periods) increasing season.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/02	Woodland Play Centre Capital Investment	£35,480	£10,000 (28%)
Description			
Purchase of capital equipment to allow Woodland Play Centre to offer services to wider ranger of young people.			

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/03	Outdoor Play Website	£7,050	£500 (7%)
Description A project to launch an outdoor play website led by Somerset Play Forum. The website promotes safe sites for outside play within Somerset and includes 6 Quantock sites. http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk/outdoorplay/home			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/04	Beech Hedgebank Restoration	£4,700	£3,525 (75%)
Description Restoration of 320m of Beech hedgebank at Crowcombe Combe. This is the last section on this road and completes Crowcombe Combe, a well used road that access the Quantock Hills			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/05	Crowcombe Play Area Redevelopment	£68,800	£10,000 (14.5%)
Description Creation of a wild play area at Crowcombe. The project has 2 distinct play areas, one formal with built structures (slide, swings etc) and another which is more about wild play and using the environment.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/06	Quantock Long-Eared Owl Project	£7,501	£3,000 (40%)
Description 3 rd year of Long Eared Owl monitoring project. This species is very rare, though the Quantock Hills offer good habitat. A new method was used for this year (recall methodology) and results will feed into a larger regional survey.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/07	Polytunnel Enterprise Scheme	£7,500	£1,000 (13.3%)
Description Support for a polytunnel enterprise scheme at Danesfield School in Williton. The Polytunnel will be used by community groups looking to support families growing their own produce as well as adults with learning difficulties who will use the resource to grow saplings for a local community woodland.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/08	Quantock Sustainable Timber	£31,000	£7,750 (25%)
Description Support for a new business looking to use a mobile sawmill to process local timber in-situ and use this timber in local construction and building. Most timber is harvested and sent away to sawmills, by processing within the woodland it means that the applicant can be more selective about the trees taken out and will also reduce production costs for Quantock timber.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/10	Willoughby Cleeve Ancient Tree Survey	£2,000	£1,500 (75%)
Description Willoughby Cleeve is part of the Exmoor and Quantock Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It has a relatively high number of ancient veteran trees most notable lapsed pollards. The survey will provide detail of the ancient trees as well as recommendations on how to manage the woodland.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/11	Plainsfield Road Crossing	£11,250	£8,250 (73%)
Description			

To provide a bridleway crossing point on the eastern side of the Quantock Hills at Plainsfield. The crossing point will link the Quantock Greenway as well as provide a useful link into the hills from the surrounding farmland.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/12	St Audries Promoted Route Enhancement	£382	£192 (50%)
Description Enhancement of permissive route at St Audries which is used by a number of promoted routes (Coleridge Way, Greenway and West Somerset Coastpath).			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/13	Halsway Manor Woodland Management	£3,550	£1,000 (28%)
Description Development of a woodland management plan which increase the flora and biodiversity values of the woodlands at Halsway Manor. A stage 2 application has been received in 2010 / 11 to take the Management Plan forward.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/14	Dead Womans Ditch Car Park Enhancement	£6,600	£3,300 (50%)
Description The aims of this project included protection of Dead Womans Ditch, a scheduled ancient monument that was being eroded by parked cars and to improve the car park surface and surrounding area.			

2. SDF 2010 / 11

- a. The AONB Service has provisionally allocated £60,000 from the Natural England single pot it receives for the SDF in 2010 / 11. At the time of writing other core funding has not been confirmed which may effect the overall amount of SDF funding.
- b. To date we have received 15 expressions of interest and 7 of these have come through as full applications (Table 2). 6 Applications have been through the panel with one outstanding. This has allocated £16,100 of the SDF.

Table 2: SDF Applications 2010 / 11

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/10/01	Walking Festival	£25,560	£3,000 (12%)
Description Support of the Exmoor and area Walking Festival which aims to encourage walking and tourism over a week in spring and a long weekend in the autumn.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/10/02	Somerset Biodiversity Partnership Officer	£31,600	£2,500 (8%)
Description Support for the employment of the Somerset Biodiversity Officer, a post which aims to deliver and help facilitate delivery of biodiversity projects.			
Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/10/03	Popham Hall Refurbishment	£115,000	£0
Description			

A project to refurbish Popham Hall in West Bagborough. The application was rejected on the grounds that there are more appropriate funding sources and that there was little of no low carbon / renewable energy specification in the refurbishment.

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/09/13	Halsway Woodland Management	£3,500	£1,100 (31%)

Description

A project to undertake woodland management to increase the biodiversity of Halsway Manor woodlands and create a rich woodland flora understory.

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/10/04	Around the edges & through the middle	£2,750	£1,500 (55%)

Description

An arts project by Sally Clark and Liz Gregory. The artists are looking at the landscape around the fringes of the Quantocks rather than on the high points (which usually attracts the artists) and using the inspiration to create art pieces. They will be linking into schools that surround the Quantocks with the aim of having a 'big art event' on the Quantocks looking out. The outputs of the 'big art event' will form part of the exhibition of work to be held at Fyne Court in the summer.

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant
QH/10/05	Wild Wednesdays	£11,000	£8,000 (73%)

Description

The National Trust are running 'Wild Wednesdays' from their Fyne Court property. These are activities aimed at families that will run through all school holidays. The grant will fund the creation of family packs as well as the necessary equipment and materials required to run the Wild Wednesdays with different packs for different age groups. The initiative is designed to encourage families to Fyne Court as well as raise awareness of the environment and work being undertaken on the Quantock Hills

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The JAC notes the report.
2. The JAC to promote the SDF at suitable opportunities.

To: Quantock Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

From: Emma-Jane Preece – Landscape Planning Officer (part time)

Landscape Planning Officer's Report - May 2010

This report covers the period from 22nd February to the 27th April 2010 – providing a progress report on some of the main areas of work undertaken by the Landscape Planning Officer. Emma-Jane continues to work 15 hours a week for the AONB Service.

1. Update on Hinkley Point C

1.1 Since the last meeting in February, I have been involved in consultation on Hinkley Point C. She attended a Landscape and Biodiversity meeting on 23rd March 2010 (organised by EDF and their consultants - Entec (Biodiversity) and Gillespies (Landscape). This meeting focussed on Site Restoration Landscape Design and Biodiversity issues but also provided the opportunity to raise a number of other issues such as light pollution and problems with the landscape and visual impact assessment information; specifically problems with the photomontages used to date in the reports.

1.2 Following the meeting in March, I re-established direct consultation with Michal Novak (Gillespies – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) and was invited to meet with Gillespies and EDF (alongside Natural England and English Heritage) on 19th April to discuss the viewpoints being assessed for judging impacts. This was a very productive meeting with a number of issues being agreed, principally:

- the need to re-take a number of photos. This is due to the weather conditions at the time of photo capture; seemingly reducing the visual impact of the existing Hinkley Point development when viewed from the Hills.
- the need for the consultants to walk the stretch of coastline from Quantocks Head towards Kilve Pill to explore potential viewpoint locations along this coastal stretch.
- all AONB views will be represented by a 70mm single image in addition to the 50mm (human eye equivalent) panoramic shots.
- the need for an additional viewpoint location - representing a mid-range view from the Hills.

Although not yet agreed, I have requested an additional viewpoint (from the AONB boundary) with the aim of trying to ensure a highly sensitive location (in relatively close proximity to the site) is represented in the assessment.

- 1.3 On Tuesday 27th April, I submitted comments to EDF in respect of the Scoping Report for the temporary jetty. Comments were submitted on behalf of the JAC directly to EDF and also to SCC for to be considered for inclusion in their responses. I have now arranged for all AONB Service comments to be copied to Natural England.

National Grid – power lines

- 1.4 I have made contact with National Grid to highlight the lack of consultation with the AONB Service in respect of the new power lines proposed to extend out from the Hinkley site. Aileen Smith (National Grid) contacted Meand has offered to come to Fyne Court to give an overview of consultation to date, to outline the next phase of consultation and to go over the details of the scheme e.g. route options, number and size of new towers and removal of old towers. I have also invited Chris Mayes and Glen Gillespie of Natural England to attend – both have accepted and a meeting has been agreed for 18th May 2010.

2. Consultation on Local Development Frameworks

- 2.1 Since the last JAC meeting, I have consulted on the Taunton Deane's Local Development Framework, providing Quantock Hills-focused comments in respect of:
- The Core Strategy
- 2.2 I have received a consultation package from West Somerset Council for inputting to the development of strategy and policy options. She will be working on this consultation over the next couple of weeks.

3. Planning Application Consultation

- 3.1 Responses have been made to a number of planning application consultation requests. As always, full details of planning application comments are available to anyone who wishes to view them. Email details for JAC councillors have been collated and future planning comments submitted on behalf of the JAC will be copied to District and County Council JAC members. If any councillors wish to be withdrawn from this list please let me know.

Sedgemoor District Council

- **37/10/00031 Land to the South of Bridgwater, between Willstock Farm and, Rhode Lane, Bridgwater.** Erection of 34 dwellings, garages, open space and ancillary works (beyond AONB boundary).

- **37/10/00012 Farringdon barns, Farringdon Farm.** Change of use, conversion and extension of barns to form 7 dwellings and commercial units (beyond AONB boundary).
- **45/09/0041 The studio, Lower Aisholt Farmhouse, Lower Aisholt.** Change of use of studio to dwelling. Another application has just been received in respect of the same property 45/10/00007.
- **Application no: 10/10/00001 (Rose Hill, Broomfield).** Erection of two storey extension and three storey extension, including conversion of part of loft to living accommodation, to NW elevation.

West Somerset District Council

- **3/38/10/001 High Barn, Weacombe Rd, West Quantoxhead.** Full replacement of existing two storey dwelling with a passive house.
- **03/07/10/001 Puddies Meadow, Crowcombe.** Extension of existing stables to provide a tackroom and a field shelter.
- **3/11/10/001 The Court House, West Quantoxhead Estate.** Alter profile of lead roof, take down parapet and build up to incorporate reinforcement.
- **3/07/10/0005 Site between Glebelands and Sunnybank, Crowcombe.** New two storey dwelling house.
- **3/07/10/004 Village Shop, Crowcombe.** Extension to existing community shop.

3.2 A number of other applications have been reviewed but comments were not submitted as the proposals were judged unlikely to have an adverse/significant impact on the AONB.

4. Update on South West Protected Landscape's Guidance for Horse keeping in protected landscapes.

4.1 Since the last JAC meeting, the guidance 'Horses, the landscape and you – equestrian guide to keeping horses in protected landscapes' has been published. Each protected landscape has taken stock of just 50 paper copies with the intention to promote access to the information via each protected landscape's website. I have prepared an article for spring edition of Update and has worked with our Communications Officer Anna Newman to develop a dedicated section on the AONB website (providing direct access to the guidance for downloading and printing). A press release has been sent out to local and regional press

(26.04.10). I will work with Anna next week to draw up a list of recipients for the limited paper copies.

5. Protocol between AONBs in Somerset and Natural England

- 5.1 There has been much discussion over the last 12 months about agreed systems of working between AONBs and Natural England. At the last regional SWPLF planning meeting, this was an item on the agenda and generated much discussion. Since the last JAC meeting, I requested a meeting with Mendip Hills and Blackdown Hills AONBs and the Natural England representatives for the three AONBs within Somerset to discuss the possibility of developing a protocol for work together on planning and landscape matters. Following this meeting it was agreed that we would develop a 'collaborative working arrangement' – a simple document that gives structure to how and when the AONBs and Natural England should liaise with one another in respect of Development Management and Planning and Landscape Policy.
- 5.2 I have developed a first draft of the document and it is currently moving between the other Officers to add to, and amend, for the purpose of developing a final version. I hope to be able to bring the agreed document to the next JAC meeting I attend.

6. Recommendations:

1. The JAC notes the report.