

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



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Friday 13 November 2009

at

2.15pm

in the

Long Room, Halsway Manor, Crowcombe

To: The Members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

Julian Gale
Group Manager, Community Governance
6 November, 2009

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. **Appointment of Vice- Chairman** – to be appointed from the Taunton Deane Borough Council representatives.
3. **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.
4. **Accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2009**
(copy appended) **and to consider any matters arising.**
5. **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.
6. **Report of the AONB Manager (Paper A –attached).**
7. **Report of the Development Officer (Paper B –attached)**
8. **Quantock Hills AONB 2010/11 Budget Request (Paper C –attached)**
9. **Quantock Hills AONB Finance Report (Paper D –attached)**
10. **Sustainable Development Fund Report (Paper E- attached)**
11. **Landscape Planning Officer Report (Paper F –attached)**
12. **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.

(24 July, 2009)

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held in the Council Chamber, West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton on Friday 24 July 2009 at 2.15pm.

Present

Somerset County Council	Mr A H Trollope-Bellew (Chairman)
Sedgemoor District Council	Mr D W Joslin Mr J Swayne
West Somerset Council	Mr C Morgan (Vice-Chairman) Mr T Taylor
Parish Representatives	Mr T Ayre Mr J Edwards Mr T Rich (Sub for Mrs C Parsons)
Natural England	Mr S Marston
CLBA	Mr H Warmington
Friends of Quantock	Mr A Hughes (Sub for Mrs L Kelly)
Forestry Commission	Mr N Salter
Quantock Commoners Association	Mrs D Salvidge

Also Present

Mrs J Sansom (WQPC), Dr P Radford (Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society), Mr B James (SCC- Officer), Ms J Burton (SDC-Officer).

Apologies were received from Mr J Edney (SCC), Mr J Wilkins (SCC), Mr N Stuart- Thorn (TDBC), Mr H Davies (WSC), Mrs L Kelly (FoQ), Mr R Ford (Forestry Commission), Mrs C Parsons (Parish Rep) and Mr J Clarke (Kingston St Mary PC).

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

1. Mr C Morgan, the Vice- Chairman , opened the meeting and called for nominations for the Chair. On the nomination of Mr D Joslin, duly seconded, Mr A H Trollope-Bellew was re- appointed as Chairman for the ensuing year.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

2. As there were no representatives from Taunton Deane Borough Council present at the meeting, it was agreed to defer the appointment of Vice- Chairman until the next meeting. Mr Morgan agreed to continue as Vice- Chairman for the time being.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. The Chairman declared an interest in agenda item no 8 – the Sustainable Development Fund report as the application for Beech Hedgebank Restoration numbered QH /09/04 was his application. If there was a need to discuss this application he would leave the room at that time.

MINUTES

4. (1) The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2009 were taken as read and signed as correct subject to the addition of the word “ each” to the last line of Minute 136 (2) relating to the amount of swaling undertaken and the words “ provision of” to the first line of Minute 138 (1) relating to car parking issues in Holford.

Matters arising

Minute 132 (2) – Quantock Hills Tick project

(2) Mr Morgan asked for an update on progress on this project as he was still concerned about the conflicting information available to the public concerning tick borne diseases. Chris Edwards and Tim Russell responded and said that the proposed Conference to be held jointly with Exmoor National Park was planned to take place early in the next financial year to which health practitioners would be invited. In the meantime information leaflets had been distributed. It was also mentioned that the British Mountaineering Council had some excellent public information on their web-site and it was suggested that a link to this could be provided on the AONB web-site. Mr Rich asked if there were any statistics available on case numbers of tick disease but it was confirmed that currently no information was available. Mr Marston said that the message of prevention by being fully clothed whilst out on the Hills was important and should continue to be put across to the public.

Minute 134 (3) – AONB Manager Report

(3) The proposed visit to the Quantocks by the Chief Executive of Natural England in June did not take place due to her attendance at Ministerial meetings.

Minute 135 (2) – Quantock Greenway at West Quantoxhead

(4) Tim Russell referred to the report at the last meeting about the wet state of the Greenway in the vicinity of the Windmill Hotel . This had been looked at but the field concerned had been sold recently and the new landowners were to be approached.

Minute 138 (2) – Anti- Social behaviour at Ram’s Combe

(5) Tim Russell reported that a meeting with the Forestry Commission had taken place and that 2 new barriers were to be erected at Seven Wells car park and at

Ashley Combe which would be locked summer and winter. In addition more evening patrols would take place. Mr Rich asked if visitors could be asked to take their litter home with them. Andy Harris said the new notice boards had that message but that monitoring would continue.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5. (1) Mrs J Sansom, representing West Quantoxhead Parish Council, asked two questions relating to the potholed state of the restricted byway at Staple Plain and the bracken spraying by helicopters currently being undertaken on the Hills. Mrs D Salvidge, Quantock Commoners Association, declared an interest in the bracken spraying item as a member of the QCA.

(2) Tim Russell responded to the question concerning the restricted byway and said that he would take this up with the National Trust and the Rights of Way Group.

(3) Chris Edwards responded to the question concerning the bracken spraying. As part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and financed by Natural England, the Quantock Commoners Association had engaged an experienced contractor to undertake the spraying of bracken on the open hill with Asulox an agricultural herbicide which has been in use for over 30 years and had been used in the past to treat bracken on the Quantocks. Asulox was used because of its non-toxicity and was considered to pose no health threat to people. The AONB Service had been involved in the public notification of the spraying programme through a meeting with Parish representatives held at Fyne Court and through the posting of public signs on all key access points to the Hills. There had been recent local press reports about people claiming to have been sprayed by the helicopter and suffering adverse health effects. The AONB Service had been supportive of the exercise and the works were being carried out professionally and geographic positioning systems were being carried by the helicopter.

(4) Mr Rich said that he had attended the parishes meeting at Fyne Court where people had the opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions about the spraying programme. No one raised any objections to the proposals. Mr Ayre said that a friend had spoken to him about the helicopter spraying and that there had been no signs posted warning the public. They had experienced headaches and nausea. The signs that he had seen were not very clear. Andy Harris said that the spraying was weather dependent and that all key access points to the Hills had been signed and he had personally replaced some signs that had become weathered. He had also talked to a number of people on the Hills and other organisations had also been consulted. He would take on board the points made about the wording of the signs.

REPORT OF THE AONB MANAGER

6. (1) The JAC considered the report of the AONB Manager on the following items :- Management Plan Review and Delivery, Officers Working Group and the AONB Service.

Management Plan Review and Delivery

(2) The Quantock Hills Management Plan 2009-14 had been included with the papers for the meeting. The draft Delivery Plan had been published for consultation and had been sent to partner organisations for comment and work had also begun on producing a Management Plan broadsheet.

Officers Working Group (OWG)

(3) The OWG had discussed the latest draft of the Memorandum of Understanding and a number of amendments were agreed but an issue had emerged concerning redundancy payments and how partners should address this if the question arose. Natural England were considering policy on this. Barry James said that this was an important issue which had financial implications for host authorities like the County Council and the question of how liabilities are shared was critical.

AONB Service

(4) It was noted that Jane Lillis, AONB Support Officer, had left to take up a post at the Exmoor Pony Centre in Dulverton. The part-time post had been amended slightly to Support Assistant and the recruitment process was underway. The new post of Volunteer Co-ordinator was currently being evaluated prior to recruitment for a 12 month period. The Annual Report for the last financial year had been included with the papers for the meeting and recorded the variety, quality and quantity of work achieved during the last year.

(5) The JAC agreed to support the Delivery Plan consultation process and noted the staff changes described in section 3 of the report.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND REPORT

7. (1) The JAC considered a report by the Development Officer updating the current position of the Sustainable Development Fund for 2009/10. £60,000 had been allocated for SDF projects for the financial year. At the present time only a small number of applications had been received, a much lower number than in previous years although the Fund had been promoted in the same way. Further promotional material would be issued in the near future.

(2) Mr Joslin had been a member of the SDF panel for the past 2 years, although it was usual for the Vice- Chairman to be appointed to the Panel. As the appointment of Vice- Chairman had been deferred until the next JAC meeting, Mr Joslin agreed to continue as a member of the Panel for the time being. The JAC noted the report and agreed to the promotion of the SDF at suitable opportunities.

RANGERS' REPORT

8. (1) The JAC considered the Rangers' report covering the period of the last 6 months on Practical Management, Access Management, Visitor Management, Heritage & Local Distinctiveness, Events and Rangers. Tim Russell gave a presentation using photographs which illustrated various aspects of the work undertaken during the last 6 months.

(2) Members asked questions concerning the results of visitor counters, clearance of Rhododendron and whether there was evidence of the existence of phythoptera fungal disease- there was an event on the disease taking place on 24 September.

Mr Swayne spoke about the Wildlife Crime Awareness day and the message for visitors not to leave valuables on display in vehicles in car parks. New talking visitor signs might be suitable for car park locations. It has been suggested that PCSOs may hold surgeries in the old AONB office at Nether Stowey and the possibility of this was being explored. The next JAC Rangers' site visit day would be on Wednesday 18 November and the focus will be on swaling.

(3) The JAC discussed the latest Deer Count figures which were attached to the Rangers' report and the extent to which Red deer were going beyond the boundary of the AONB into lowland areas.

DATES FOR JAC MEETINGS 2009/10

9. The following dates were agreed for JAC meetings for the next 12 months :-

Friday 13 November 2009
Friday 26 February 2010
Friday 7 May 2010
Friday 23 July 2010

All meetings would commence at 2.15pm and be held in local venues.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. (1) Mr Ayre raised the issue of the Coastal Path Bill and possible effects on the AONB, SSI sites and the Steart Bird Sanctuary. Tim Russell responded that the final details including routes were not known yet, but that an item could be included in the next Rangers' report. Barry James indicated that Sarah Littler in the Rights of Way Group at the County Council would be able to provide more details. The consultation period on the Bill was now over and routes had been sorted out at local level for example the path at Hinkley Point existed on the shoreline.

(2) Mr Hughes representing Friends of Quantock asked if the Minutes of JAC meetings could be made available at an early stage. It was pointed out that until the JAC approved the Minutes at their next meeting the Minutes would have to be considered as draft until formally approved by the JAC. It was agreed that the draft Minutes could be made available on the AONB web-site within 6 weeks of the JAC meeting.

(The meeting closed at 4.35pm)

CHAIRMAN

Qhjac mins 24.07.09.

**Quantock Hills JAC
13th November 2009
REPORT OF THE AONB MANAGER**

1 Management Plan Review and Delivery

1.1 The draft Delivery Plan has now been sent to 35 partner contacts for consultation and many responses have already been received. I am pleased to report a very positive response to this initial sign-up and when we are in receipt of all responses the Delivery Plan will be amended accordingly and published (electronically). A more detailed process of project development is already underway through Iain's work and I shall continue to work with partner organisations on the level and type of their involvement in delivering the Management Plan.

1.2 The Management Plan broadsheet has been designed and now includes a large map of the AONB along with a break-down of potential delivery projects showing what we hope to achieve through the period of this Management Plan, and information on the landscape combinations that make this area special. Communications Officer Georgie Grant is now on maternity leave and I am grateful that she managed to complete the design of this information document before leaving. I am hoping to have copies back from the printers in time to be tabled at this JAC meeting, it will then be widely distributed. This document has been designed to be of interest both to a wide range of relevant organisations and to the wider public, it gives a real flavour of the area and what we are doing/will do to look after it.

2 Officers Working Group (OWG)

2.1 At the recent OWG meeting of Wednesday 15th July attendees were: Steve Marston (NE, Chairman), Ian Porter (AONB), Jane Lillis (AONB), Barry James (SCC), Janette Burton (SDC), Angela Lamplough (WSC) and Chris Edwards (AONB). Apologies were received from Ian Clark (TDBC) and Anthony Trollope-Bellew (JAC).

2.2 Funding contributions for 2010/11 were discussed. Somerset County Council indicated a cut in funding is likely, Sedgemoor District Council facing heavy cuts – grants committee will decide contribution, West Somerset hoping to maintain contribution, Natural England may reduce contribution to 95% of this year, but

trying not to, Forestry Commission will maintain contribution (for Partnership Ranger), Taunton Deane not represented due to illness. Further discussion indicated that EDF should be approached for either a core contribution or a lump sum for a Quantock Trust Fund offsetting impacts from the construction phase of potential new development at Hinkley Point. Other funding possibilities were also discussed.

2.3 Officers Working Group Terms of Reference were agreed and are attached to this report as Appendix 1. The draft updated Memorandum of Understanding was discussed, however the section on funding of redundancy settlements, should this issue arise, is currently the subject of negotiation with numerous AONBs and we await the outcome of those discussions.

2.4 Other OWG items are covered in the reports for this meeting.

3 AONB Service

3.1 New Support Assistant Katy Coate started with the AONB Service towards the end of September, she has already become an invaluable team member and is attending briefly today to meet the JAC. Communications Officer Georgie Grant has gone on maternity leave and under a flexible working arrangement Iain is now working a full time (37 hour) four day week to ensure time for his new baby boy.

3.2 Under Somerset County Council's recruitment freeze special permission has been granted (due to our partnership funding) for us to recruit a temporary replacement for Georgie and to fill the Volunteer Co-ordinator vacancy. Funding is already in place for this new post as a one-year contract, intended to further enhance voluntary contributions to our "on the ground" work part-compensating for the loss of a full-time Ranger post last year.

3.3 I have agreed to take the lead on a sustainability project for Fyne Court, working with our landlord, the National Trust, to evaluate the current situation and develop more sustainable practices. The SCC produced report on the acoustic characteristics of the Music Room (main hall) at Fyne Court is now available. This confirms that the room has a 3 second sustain – good for non-amplified music but very bad for meetings. The report makes recommendations on how this could be improved and I will be approaching the National Trust to see if a solution can be implemented. Finally the new AONB website is now live and we have already received good

reviews of it, I hope you will find time to have a good look at www.quantockhills.com.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The JAC is recommended to:

- **Support the Terms of Reference agreed at the OWG**
- **Note the report**

CHRIS EDWARDS
QUANTOCK HILLS AONB MANAGER
November 2009

Appendix 1

Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Officers Working Group – Terms of Reference

Membership

1. Somerset County Council – Environmental Management Group Manager
 2. West Somerset Council – Economy & Climate Change Officer
 3. Sedgemoor District Council – Regeneration and Landscape Officer
 4. Taunton Deane Borough Council – Heritage and Landscape Manager
 5. Natural England – Account Manager Quantock Hills AONB
 6. Forestry Commission – Quantock Forest Officer
 7. Joint Advisory Committee – Chairman
 8. Quantock Hills AONB Service – Manager, Development Officer, team members as appropriate
- Meeting Notes: Quantock Hills AONB Service Support Assistant

Purpose

To provide a liaison, support and monitoring body of Core Funding Partners in respect of management and financial matters for the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and to support partner organisations in fulfilling the statutory requirements set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Responsibilities

- To advise on and keep under review the management, liaison and staff structure for the Quantock Hills AONB.
- To make recommendations to the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) on its structure and membership and advise on methods of engaging members and the wider AONB partnership including Quantock communities, to ensure their active involvement in AONB work.
- To initiate and oversee appointment of the AONB Team Manager.
- To advise on the 5-yearly review of the AONB Management Plan.
- To maintain focus on the delivery of the Management Plan by the AONB Team and JAC.
- To ensure that the work of the AONB Partnership is appropriately integrated with the functions and policies of its partners.
- To monitor and ensure that all resources available for AONB management are used to their best advantage.
- To actively promote and support the aims and objectives of the AONB with partner organisations.
- To support JAC members at their quarterly meetings and propose JAC agenda items.

Frequency of meetings

The Steering Group should meet no less than four times a year and its meetings should be timed so that they link with the meetings of the JAC.

Location of meetings

The venue for the meetings of the Officers Working Group is the AONB Service HQ at Fyne Court, Broomfield.

Chairing the Group

The chair of the Steering Group will be selected an annual basis from one of the core funding partners.

Secretariat

The Secretariat for the Steering Group will be provided by the AONB Service.

November 4th 2009

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee
From: Iain Porter, Development Officer

13 November 2009

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER REPORT

This report covers the reporting period April - October 2009.

1. Development Officer Resource.
 - a. Development Officer time has been used to work on existing projects, manage the SDF, manage 2 staff posts, assist with development of the Delivery Plan and develop partnership funding bids. 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. Interreg IV bid development. The Quantock Hills AONB Service has entered into a partnership project called SULIS. Unfortunately at the JST committee meeting 2 weeks ago the INTERREG IV bid, SULIS, was rejected. We will hopefully get a detailed report of the reasons soon as the committee (PSC) actually recommended approval but the JST [who we thought were just there to administer the scheme] overturned this and rejected the scheme. There have been a number of irregularities with the JST appraisal of the project which the partners are awaiting responses on. The SULIS bid contained 4 sub-themes and looked to work between 3 regional parks in France, 8 protected landscapes in the UK, The National Trust and Plymouth University. The themes were:
 - i. Sustainable Agriculture - investigating the effect of climate change
 - ii. Bocage & woodland management for woodfuel (this is the one Quantocks is involved in)
 - iii. Landscape Mapping]
 - iv. Architecture - importance of local design
 - c. The next stage is for the English partners to meet and see if there is scope for any of these themes can continue in some way - smaller projects, less partners, different funding streams etc. I will catch up with the team before this meeting to see if we want to get involved in any of the other themes, if they do continue (for example do we want to join in the landscape mapping work?).
 - d. Western Somerset Local Action Group. The JAC will be aware that the Quantock Hills AONB Service is a member of the executive for the Western Somerset Local Action Group. The LAG is now up and running and has received a number of projects to appraise. We are currently developing the 2010 delivery plan which was consulted on last night at the full WSLAG meeting.
 - e. The July 2009 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. 2008/09 Project Work.

- a. Woodland Management. Woodland Management covers a wide remit of the AONB Services work. During this period, working with Ranger Andy Harris we have now received a Woodland Management Plan for Cothelstone Hill. The plan provides management options for wildlife and also opportunities for woodfuel. There will be an option to visit the site to look at the proposals at next springs annual event. Further work has also occurred with woodfuel both locally and regionally where we are looking to work with other (such as Silvanus Trust) who are able to access Axis 2 funding from the RDPE. [*Delivering Management Plan Action Point FWAP1, FWAP2*]
- b. Quantock Adder Project. In spring Kevin Palmer was employed to undertake a pilot adder survey on 3 sites on the Quantock Common. The European Adder, *Vipera berus*, is Britain's only native species of venomous snake and is known to live in heathland throughout southern Britain. There has been a lack of reported adder sightings since the late 1970s and this has led to the assumption that the Quantocks is not an important population 'hotspot'. Kevin's study has found that there is a significant population and a number of important hibernation areas (the winter dens where adders hibernate) within the 3 study areas. The results of this study will be feed into management plans for the Quantock Common to protect and enhance the habitat for adders and we will be looking to conduct further studies to expand our knowledge of the adder population on the Quantock Hills. [*Delivering Management Plan Action Point WAP1, WAP2, WAP4*]

3. 2010 / 11 Project Development.

- a. The 2010 / 11 project plan is currently being drafted. We are ensuring maximum flexibility in light of potential funding cuts and investigating external funding sources.
- b. There are a number of projects which are currently being developed by the AONB Service in partnership with other organisations.
- **1SW**. A regional project to develop off-road cycling from Stage 2 of the RDPE Axis 3 Sustainable Rural Tourism funding. The project involves 14 partners including Sports England, Forestry Commission, CTC and the SWPLF. The project will enable the Quantocks to undertake a survey of current provision and to develop information provision for off-road cyclist already coming to the Quantocks. There may be scope to develop routes for lower end cyclists (accidentals and casuals). We are expecting to find out the outcome of the funding bid in the very near future.
- **Landscape Partnership**. The AONB Service is investigating if this funding stream from the HLF is suitable for delivery in a number of related projects. The funding application process is quite detailed and not to be undertaken lightly but would be able to fund delivery on:
 - a. Natural and built environment enhancement
 - b. Local community engagement
 - c. Increased opportunities for learning and access
 - d. Increased opportunities for rural skills

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **The JAC notes the report.**

To: Quantock Hills JAC

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer 13 November 2009

QUANTOCK HILLS AONB 2010/11 Budget Request

AONB Budget Request 2010 / 11

The Quantock Hills AONB Service is requesting the following amounts from the core funding partner for the next financial year (Table 1).

Table 1: Funding Request

Source	Contribution 2009 10	Contribution 2010 11	Comments
Natural England	£207,941	£207,941	Might be 95% of value
Somerset County Council	£34,500	£34,500	Likely to be a cut. Level not known
Sedgemoor District Council	£17,500	£17,500	AONB to present to grants committee
Taunton Deane Borough Council	£16,500	£16,500	
West Somerset Council	£21,500	£21,500	Bid has gone forward to WSC.
TOTAL	£297,941	£297,941	

2. The following budgets are based on a reduced staff unit which comprises AONB Manager, Development Officer, Landscape Planning Officer, Senior Ranger, Partnership Ranger, Communications Officer and Support Assistant.
3. Table 2 details the Core Budget of the Quantock Hills AONB Service. The format has changed slightly to show breakdown of budget by post and main budget category, for example Accommodation which includes rent, rates, utility bills, etc. Further breakdown is available from the Development Officer is required.
4. Table 4 details the SDF budget for 2010 11. The AONB Service is keen to keep the same level of SDF as this is seen as a very useful local community fund which delivers actions.
5. Table 5 lists the projects which the AONB Service is looking to start in 2010 11. There is a wide range of projects which are currently being developed and funding streams are still being investigated to ensure delivery. Until core funding levels and expenditure are agreed the project plan for 2010 / 11 cannot be confirmed so this list should be treated as indicative.
6. The AONB Service is aware of the critical financial pressures the local authorities are currently under and will be working with the OWG to look at scenarios if AONB funding is cut.

Table 2: Core Budget

Item	2009 10	2010 11
AONB Manager (salary, NI, SA, tavel)	43,800	44,900
Development Officer	39,000	40,000
Landscape Planning Officer (p/t)	15,900	16,300
Senior Ranger	44,000	45,000
Partnership Ranger	38,100	39,000
Communication Officer (p/t)	10,100	10,300
Support Assistant (p/t)	12,200	12,500
Training	2,400	2,400
Maintenance costs	1,500	1,600
Accommodation	14,800	13,500
Partnership Budget	9,600	6,200
Equipment	3,820	2,320
Quantock Events	1,200	1,100
Research & Development	7,700	4,200
Other Costs	1,000	1,500
TOTAL	£245,120	£240,820
Natural England	145,820	137,966
Somerset County Council	33,000	34,500
Sedgemoor District Council	17,000	17,554
Taunton Deane Borough Council	16,000	16,500
West Somerset Council	16,000	17,000
Forestry Commission	17,300	17,300

Table 3: SDF Budget

Item	2009 10	2010 11
SDF project budget	60,000	60,000
INCOME		
Natural England	60,000	60,000

Table 4: Project Budget

Project	Cost
<u>Quantock Volunteers:</u> This project is looking to develop volunteer involvement in AONB delivery and builds on the partnership work between the AONB Service and the National Trust. Budget is spent on fixed term part-timer employment of Volunteer Coordinator post. (project started 2009/10) –	£11,100
<u>Habitats & Biodiversity:</u> A further years surveying of Quantock Adders building on the successful 2009 pilot survey. Woodland bird survey. – Delivering WAP 1 / WAP2 / WAP4	£4,000
<u>Integrated Access:</u> Maintenance of current circular walks and the enhancement of the Quantock Greenway. Ramscombe AAA enhancement project. Development of AAA information material (e.g. leaflet) – Delivering VAP6	£5,000
<u>Views to the Hills:</u> A project to assess the importance of views into the Quantock Hills from the surrounding areas. The work will provide local planning authorities with a evidence base on which to make informed decisions =- Delivering DAP6 / DAP8	£10,000
<u>Quantock Research Project:</u> Undertake collation and dissemination of Quantock related research to ensure correct data is used for informing Management Plan review – Delivering EAP7	£1,500
<u>Quantock Seascapes:</u> a project to assess the visual importance of the Quantock coast – Delivering GCAP3	£2,000
<u>Quantock Information Points:</u> Development of material for information points at local service outlets – Delivering CAP5	£1,500
TOTAL	£35,100
INCOME	
Natural England	£9,975
West Somerset Council	£4,000
Quantock Hills RIA	£11,100
TOTAL	£25,075
<i>Balance</i>	<i>-£10,025</i>

Recommendation:

- **Agree partner contribution in principal subject to agreement by individual partner mechanism, e.g. approval by portfolio holder, approval by committee etc.**

APPENDIX 1A: Quantock Hills AONB Service Actions 2010 - 11. – DRAFT

These actions have been taken from the Quantock Hills AONB Delivery Plan and represent the actions that will be undertaken by the AONB Service. Additional actions will be undertaken by partner organisations.

Action Point	ACTION
FAP2 : Encourage sensitive management practices by supporting the provision of agri-environment advice on schemes and organic conversion in the Quantocks.	Engage FWAG (or other similar group) to run Quantock specific workshops / HLS promotion days and offer free advice to interest farmers within AONB
FAP 4: Oppose the cultivation of Genetically Modified crops in and bordering the AONB until definitive research results are available, and continue to screen energy crop planting for impacts.	Engagement with local planning authorities
FWAP 1: Promote best practice in woodland management, including appropriate native broadleaf planting, throughout the AONB, particularly through the provision of advice on woodland grant schemes and links with SCC owned woods in the Quantock area	Development of Cothelstone Hill woodland management through provision of EWGS.
FWAP 2: Stimulate local markets for products of woodland management including woodfuel, and investigate linking producers to local markets	Link with regional Bocage type project to continue the SULIS project development at a smaller scale
FWAP 3: Further develop partnerships with forest owners / managers across the AONB and maintain JAC consultation on forest plans to re-establish landscape quality through native broadleaf planting and re-shaping commercial forestry areas	Develop woodland owners / managers group to discuss relevant issues.
FWAP 4: Further develop understanding and sensitive management, including the management of grazing animals, of the Quantock Upland Oakwoods	Engagement with NE, QCA and QDMCG to develop management plan for SAC oak woodlands. Support the QDMCG through provision of secretariat
FWAP 5: Support the restoration and enlargement of heathland and oakwoods through working with forest owners in the AONB	Develop management plan for Slades heathland restoration area including funding implications
WAP 1: Continue to support the implementation of the Quantock Common Management Plan through partnership working and agri-environment support to protect the wild character, wildlife, landscape beauty and grazing interests of the heathland and upland oakwoods of the Quantock Hills.	Support the Quantock Commons Management Group and engage with NE and QCA to look at next phase of management after current CSS end
WAP 2: Coordinate implementation of the Quantock Biodiversity Action Plan, and develop a joint working programme between the relevant partners.	Develop joint working programme once Quantock BAP agreed
WAP 4: Support the continued monitoring of indicator species for key Quantock habitats, and of deer populations in support of the Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group.	Carry out deer count. Carry out Adder population and hibernacula survey for BAP. Assist with Woodland Bird Survey undertaken by RSPB and publication of information leaflet (2011)
HAP 1: Protect known archaeological and historically significant sites and record newly discovered features through partnership projects with	Meet with Heritage Group to discuss phase 2 Quantock Project

archaeology and historic landscape specialists	
GCAP 1: Protect existing geological exposures where they are not a major scar in the landscape and resist further quarrying where it would have a negative impact on the landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity or local communities of the Quantocks.	Engage with local planning authorities.
GCAP 3: Protect and enhance coastal areas of the AONB through projects and initiatives supporting sensitive management of the landscape and wildlife of these areas in line with the emerging Somerset Coastal Strategy.	Engage with Somerset Coastal Strategy and other protected landscapes. Look to develop Quantock Seascape Project
CEAP 1: Undertake a climate change assessment and develop adaptation responses for each of the sub-theme sections in this plan.	Undertake assessment (yr 2)
DAP 1: Identify significant potential development in the Quantock area and protect local distinctiveness and landscape character through comments and advice to Planning Authorities from an AONB perspective.	Engage with local planning authorities
DAP 2: Maintain an understanding of changing development control structures and continue to comment on development plans at their consultation stage to resist inappropriate development affecting the AONB.	Engage with local planning authorities and NAAONB.
DAP 3: Maintain AONB staff planning expertise and implement the Quantock Planning Protocol through liaison with District planning officers.	Employment of Landscape Planning Officer
DAP 4: Ensure Planning Authorities fully consider the impact of planning permission for new agricultural buildings where the proposed development is out of character in terms of scale, size, location, design or external appearance and would adversely affect the appearance of the locality.	Engage with local planning authorities
DAP 5: Ensure Planning Authorities fully consider the impact of planning permission for telecommunications masts or other structures that affect the skyline, character or landscape of the AONB and encourage the locating underground of services hardware in the AONB including cables and wires.	Engage with local planning authorities
DAP 6: Continue the development of AONB landscape characterisation and assessment.	Continue LCA work.
DAP 7: Pursue early JAC consultation in respect of planning applications outside the AONB boundary that may have a significant effect on the setting of the Quantock Hills or their outlook, including increased light pollution.	Engage with local planning authorities. Look to undertake Quantock Views Project to provide an evidence base in respect of views into the Quantock Hills from the surrounding area
VAP 1: Encourage all events and group users of the hill to notify the AONB Service well in advance of planned events to seek advice on uses as agreed with landowners and in the Code of Conduct.	Engagement with event users and promotion of event notification through recreation and access groups.
VAP 2: Maintain a strong on the ground AONB Service presence including the JAC Partnership/Forestry Commission employment of a shared Recreation Ranger and the active	Employment of joint ranger post.

involvement of Volunteers.	
VAP 3: Minimise active promotion of the sensitive Quantock hilltops as a tourism destination to prevent visitor numbers becoming damagingly unsustainable.	Engagement with SSTSG and other organisations to ensure promotion of Quantock Hills AONB is sensitive
VAP 5: Clear or arrange the clearance of litter and fly tipping and work with partner organisations to seek prosecutions where possible	Develop database of flytipping incidents and report all incidents to relevant local authority.
VAP 6: Provide maintain and locally promote circular routes including sites of local interest and based on Quantock villages and parking areas off the hilltops in consultation with Parish Councils.	Undertake 3 audits of promoted routes. Project costs associated with any works that may need to be undertaken.
VAP 7: Implement the recommendations of the AONB Visitor Attractions Study (Tym and Partners Jan 2007) including Quantock information points at key locations.	Engage with Hestercombe Gardens Trust regarding potential for visitor information at Hestercombe. Engage with the National Trust in the development of Fyne Court as a visitor site
VAP 8: Gather survey information to identify visitor trends and policies, include monitoring of impacts on Special Areas of Conservation where active restoration or re-routing may be appropriate.	Collect bi-annual data from 15 visitor counters installed throughout the Quantock Hills AONB. Disseminate information to partners (RoW team, FC & NT).
ARAP 1: Develop a Quantock Access Management Group including RoW officers and access user-group representatives to meet twice yearly or as required.	Hold 2 meetings of the Quantock Access Group
ARAP 2: Develop waymarking and timber signposting of rights of way comprehensively on enclosed land and promoted routes and to a landscape-sensitive level on open-access land through partnership with the County Council Rights of Way Team.	Engagement with SCC RoW team
ARAP 4: Limit vehicle damage to tracks through agreement with users, implementation of recent legislation and Traffic Regulation Order restrictions on sensitive routes	Undertake audit of restricted byways to ensure signage meets legal requirements
ARAP 5: Continue to implement the proposals of the 1997 "Access For All to the Quantock Hills" Fieldfare Trust Report through partnerships and negotiation and produce a "Quantock Hills All Ability Access" leaflet providing clear access information for the range of Quantock locations.	Produce costed proposals for implementing the proposals. Design and produce Quantock Hills All Ability Access leaflet.
ARAP 6: Continue to limit access conflicts and rights of way abuse through Ranger and Volunteer patrolling and information through local media and leaflets.	Carry out patrolling at key times and encourage active engagement of conservation volunteers. Produce 2 press releases to go out at key times for issues such as Ticks, sheep & bird worrying and fire risk. Undertake guided walks programme of 18 events throughout year
ARAP 7: Limit vehicle damage to tracks through agreement with users, implementation of recent legislation and Traffic Regulation Order restrictions on sensitive routes.	Engagement with SCC RoW team to ensure quick resolution to legal issue of Restricted Byways. Engagement with police teams to ensure enforcement in respect of vehicles on tracks
ARAP 8: Work with the County Council Rights of Way Group to ensure access on the Quantocks benefits from the statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.	Engagement with SCC RoW team for RoW improvements in the Quantock Hills

TAP 4: Pursue JAC liaison and consultation on changes to road layouts, signing and road maintenance affecting the AONB.	Engagement with local authority and area highway teams.
CAP 1: Encourage, support and develop partnerships with professional agencies and local authority rural development initiatives with Quantock communities.	Engagement with Western Somerset LAG. Production of bi-annual newsletter to go to local communities
CAP 3: Pursue agreements with local shops and other suitable outlets to improve the provision of guidance and information in and around the AONB and encourage visitor spending.	Design local information points materials. Engage with local outlets to gauge support for LIPs.
CAP 4: Support community projects where they meet Management Plan policies.	Engagement with parish councils and other groups. Promote funding opportunities of SDF
CAP 5: Support Quantock communities developing and delivering Parish Plans	Engagement with parish councils developing Parish Plans.
CAP 6: Maintain strong links with the Local Area Agreement and relevant Community Strategies through delivery and review processes	Engage with LSP and Delivery groups
EAP 1: Actively investigate potential for an improved Information Centre for the Quantock Hills in line with recommendations from the Visitor Attractions Study 2007.	Engage with the National Trust regarding potential for visitor information at Hestercombe
EAP 2: Encourage the development and sharing of Quantock research with appropriate organisations and educational establishments.	Engage with the Sedgemoor Learning Alliance and look to develop research projects for local educational establishments
EAP 3: Develop interpretative visitor materials carrying key messages to protect the Quantock Hills AONB. In partnership with other organisations make wildlife, historic landscape and farming information available to the general public and educational establishments.	Provide visitor leaflet at key service providers
EAP 4: Annually update and review the Quantock Hills AONB and Education websites.	Update and promote AONB and AONB Education website
EAP 5: Implement the actions from the 2008 AONB Communications Review.	Implement the review including new visitor leaflet and easy access guide, consolidating key messages and brand
EAP 6: Support learning opportunities in the Quantock Hills through engagement with initiatives such as the "Growing Schools" programme.	Engage with the Sedgemoor Learning Alliance and look to develop QCA Schemes of Work relating to protected landscapes
EAP 7: Encourage the development and sharing of Quantock research with appropriate organisations and educational establishments	Collate Quantock research to allow for accurate fact base to inform 2014 Management Plan review.

To: Quantock Hills JAC

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer

13 November 2009

QUANTOCK HILLS AONB FINANCE REPORT

Core Funding 2008 / 09

1. Core funding is currently running on target. Due to the AONB Service (under host Somerset County Council) working on a new procurement / finance system called SAP much of the expenditure has been miscoded. However we are now able to access the line items (expenditure) and assess budget charges.
2. There may be a small underspend in salaries. This is due to the change of Support Assistant staff when Jane Lillis left (July) and the fact the Georgie Grant has recently gone on maternity leave. It is likely that this underspend will be used for advertising staff vacancies and cross service re-charges.
3. Other core budget lines are on target.

Project Funding 2008 / 09

4. The Quantock Hills AONB Service Project Budget has been cut this year due to a loss of funding partner contributions. This has meant a reduced delivery in terms of projects with the ES promotion project being cut and the Woodland Bird Survey being postponed until 2010.
5. Quantock Adder Survey: Budget £3,000. Expenditure £3,000. Project delivered on time and in budget
6. Integrated Access: Budget £1,000. Expenditure £0. Project currently delayed as audits have yet to occur.

SDF 2008 / 09

Please see separate SDF paper.

Recommendation:

- **The JAC notes the report.**

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer 13 November 2009

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 has been allocated for SDF projects.
- b. To date a small number of applications have come in (Table 1). We have allocated £28,593 which leave a further £31,407 to allocate. I am aware of 5 projects which are looking to enter SDF applications in the near future.
- c. We have undertaken 2 rounds of promotion including writing to parish councils and other community groups however there is still a lower level of interest than in previous years.
- d. The SDF Panel. Currently the SDF panel is made up of three members, JAC Vice-Chair (tbc at meeting), 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.
- e. It should be noted that David Joslin has represented the JAC on the SDF panel since its inception. David has been a very useful panel member engaging with the process and projects to a high level. I wish to thank David for his time and commitment to the SDF over the last 4 years.

Table 1: Quantock Hills SDF applications 2009 / 10.

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant	Outcome
QH/09/01	Sustainable Showers	£9,135	£4,568 (50%)	Accept
QH/09/02	Woodland Play Centre Capital Investment	£35,480	£10,000 (28%)	Accept
QH/09/03	Outdoor Play Website	£7,050	£500 (7%)	Accept
QH/09/04	Beech Hedgebank Restoration	£4,700	£3,525 (75%)	Accept
QH/09/05	Crowcombe Play Area Redevelopment	£68,800	£10,000 (14.5%)	Accept
	TOTAL	£125,165	£28,593	

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The JAC notes the report.
2. The JAC to promote the SDF at suitable opportunities.
3. The JAC appoint the JAC vice-chair to the panel.

To: Quantock Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

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

**Landscape Planning Officer Report
November 2009**

This report covers the period from the end of March to the end of October 2009 – providing a progress report on some of the main areas of work undertaken by the Landscape Planning Officer since returning from maternity leave.

1. Consultation on Hinkley Point

1.1 Emma-Jane has been consulted on the Landscape and Visual Impact Baseline Assessment prepared by the consultants (Gillespies LLP) on behalf of EDF Development Company Ltd for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point. The baseline assessment is, as the name suggests, a baseline of information on a) the landscape resource and b) the visual resource of the site and its surroundings. The information contained within the study forms the basis from which the consultants make their judgements on the 'landscape and visual impacts' (LVIA) of the proposed development. The LVIA forms part of the full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) required as part of the planning application.

1.2 As part of the baseline study the consultants have selected a range of views, looking towards Hinkley Point from within the AONB (as well as from a number of sites beyond the AONB). The sites were chosen within the AONB following an initial meeting with Chris Edwards in December 2008. Emma-Jane undertook a site visit in April 2009 to assess the viewpoints selected. The purpose of the site work was to see if the photos provided by the consultants for these locations were representative of the actual views to Hinkley Point. It was also an opportunity to visit other viewpoints that might be important considerations/additions for inclusion in the baseline report. These possible viewpoints were discussed in advance of the site visit with Partnership Ranger Andy Harris (due to his familiarity with views to Hinkley Point from within the AONB).

1.3 Following the site work, Emma-Jane recommended that an additional six viewpoints be added in order to give a more accurate representation of viewing experiences towards Hinkley Point from the AONB. Following this advice, Gillespies responded, stating that four of the recommended six viewpoints would be added to the baseline report.

1.4 At the time of writing this report, Emma-Jane is in receipt of the Scoping Report for the temporary Aggregates Jetty that forms part of the Hinkley C proposals. She will be feeding back any relevant comments in respect of the Landscape and Visual Impact chapter.

2. Planning Application Consultation

- 2.1 Planning lists for all three local authorities crossing the hills have been reviewed. Responses to planning applications (sent to the AONB Service from the respective local authorities for our consideration) have been made, where it was considered that comments from the AONB Service on behalf of the JAC would be valuable to the decision making process. Full details of these planning application comments are available to anyone who wishes to look at them.
- 2.2 **Application 06/09/0017 (Taunton Deane Borough Council):** erection of a 100kw wind turbine (37 metres high to hub with rotors at 21 metres diameter) on lands at Lydeard House, Bishops Lydeard.
- 2.3 The applicant flew a balloon on site for 2 days showing the proposed hub height (not blade tip height) of the turbine. During this period Emma-Jane undertook site visits to establish the likely visual impacts of the proposal. The applicant's landscape and visual survey report was reviewed and it was found that a number of the judgements made in the report were at odds with the Landscape Planning Officer's own findings on site. Emma-Jane liaised with Taunton Deane's Landscape Officer as well as with Natural England. Draft comments were sent to the JAC's Planning Officers' Working Group for comment before final submission.
- 2.4 The AONB Service, on behalf of the JAC, submitted an objection with very detailed comments to Taunton Deane Borough Council stating that the proposal would have significant effects on views to and from the AONB and on its landscape character. This application was REFUSED for four reasons, the first being that *"The proposed development, due to its size and form, will have a significant adverse impact on the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty together with the local landscape character by reason of its visual intrusion which will adversely affect the setting of this landscape. As such the proposal is considered contrary to advice given in PPS1, PPS7 and PPS22, and Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies C13(A), EN10 and EN12"*.
- 2.5 This decision is important for the AONB as it sets a precedent for further structures of this scale within the setting/close to the boundary of the AONB.
- 2.6 Detailed comments have also been submitted in respect of:
- Application 45/09/0008:** Alterations of access and erection of double garage and agricultural building with yard area and silage pit on land adjacent to Stockham Cottages, West Bagborough; and

Application 40/09/00002/LE: Erection of two storey extension, erection of double garage on site of existing (to be demolished), use of shed as office and installation of satellite dish and solar panels on SE elevation of dwelling and installation of solar panel on roof of SW elevation of garage – Friarn, Over Stowey.

Application 03/16/09/007: Formation of 'parking area; and provision of path to join up with existing layby to the north – Woodlands lay-by, Holford.

Application 40/09/00006/SJR: Erection of detailed double garage and widening of existing bridge access – 2 Cockercombe, Over Stowey.

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

Friends of Quantock

- 2.8 Alan Hughes (Friends of Quantock) came to meet with Emma-Jane at Fyne Court with the news that he will be monitoring and recording 'all planning applications falling within the AONB, are very close to its boundaries or might have an impact on the AONB'. Mr Hughes will make contact with Emma-Jane if there are issues he feels need to be raised with the AONB Service in respect of a particular application. Emma-Jane is grateful for Alan taking the time to come and speak to her.

Letter to Taunton Deane Borough Council

- 2.9 It should be noted, in respect of Planning Application **45/09/0008 (Stockham Cottages – West Bagborough)**, that a letter has been sent to Tim Burton at Taunton Deane Borough Council expressing concern and disappointment over the lack of consultation (post AONB comments) in respect of the application. The AONB Service submitted two sets of comments questioning the absence of any kind of robust, detailed landscape assessment of the scheme (particularly considering the potential impact on views and change in character of the AONB landscape). Comments and questions were not addressed before a decision was made (Approval). The AONB Service and Natural England have both submitted letters outlining the lack of consultation by TDBC and are awaiting a response. The intention of the letter is to try to ensure that the typically good communication links between the AONB Service and TDBC, experienced to date, are upheld and continued into the future. A copy of the letter is added as **Appendix 1** at the end of this report.

3. Renewable Energy (Wind)

- 3.1 It should be noted that a call was received at the AONB office (week commencing 26th October 2009) from an energy consultant (Distributed Generation) seeking advice/the AONB Service's position in respect of a potential wind turbine application close to Enmore/Goathurst (220kw with a

hub height of 36m and a blade diameter of 24m). It was made clear that the AONB Service would not engage in pre-application advice but would provide objective, evidence-based comments as and when a formal planning application was submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Emma-Jane pointed the consultant to the recent Bishop's Lydeard application and the grounds for refusal.

- 3.2 In addition to this recent enquiry, Ian Clark (Landscape Manager at Taunton Deane Borough Council) has also discussed with Chris Edwards the possibility of exploring options for small scale wind turbines in the Southern Hills.
- 3.3 It seems timely to mention the application and the recent discussions around wind energy to highlight the apparent pace at which renewable energy (in this case wind) is moving up the agenda and to note that it is a real point of consideration for the AONB, and no longer something that might only concern the Quantock Hills in the future.

4. Equestrian Related Development

- 4.1 Emma-Jane is part of a task and finish group representing all of the protected landscapes in the southwest (AONBs and National Parks). This group has been set up to develop regional guidance related to the keeping of horses in protected landscapes. National Guidance has just been prepared (by Frances Clayton of the Kent Downs AONB – funded by SEEDA and DEFRA). Emma-Jane has consulted on this national guidance during its development. This is a very detailed document giving generic advice on grassland management, equestrian buildings and development (with planning checklist), trees and hedges, fencing and equine waste management.
- 4.2 The purpose of a regional document is to act as a summary document (specifically geared at and endorsed by all the protected landscapes of the Southwest) and to act as a signpost – guiding people to the detail of the National guidance and to any local guidance prepared individually by, and specifically for, each AONB and National Park. For the most part these local guides will be developed in the future although some are available now, such as the 'Mendip Hills AONB - guidance for horse-related development'. It is the intention that the Quantock Hills AONB Service will develop similar guidance during the current Management Plan period.
- 4.3 The task and finish group has two representatives from the British Horse Society (BHS). Their contribution to the study will help to ensure the document is written in the right way to appeal to the key target audience - horse keepers. This is imperative as the AONBs and National Parks want to get across the critical message that horse keeping can positively contribute to the landscape but, there are many examples of

bad management, that are having an adverse impact on the quality and character of protected landscapes.

- 4.4 Emma-Jane has written a key section of the regional guidance, in conjunction with Julie Garbutt of the BHS. The document is currently at Final Draft stage and a meeting will be on 2nd December to agree how the guidance will be designed and marketed, for a launch relatively early in the new year.

5. Planning Protocol

- 5.1 The Quantock Hills AONB Planning Protocol, prepared to Draft stage before Emma-Jane left for maternity leave, has been circulated to the JAC Planning Officers' Working Group and to the Landscape and Planning Officers at the local authorities and Somerset County Council. The Protocol outlines, the roles, processes and agreed set of procedures involved in dealing with different planning issues (policy and development control) likely to have an effect on the Quantock Hills AONB landscape. The Protocol includes 'Guidance for the referral of Planning Applications' which should instigate a consistent approach (across the three Local Planning Authorities) to consulting with the AONB Service on applications.
- 5.2 Positive feedback has been received from all three local authorities in respect of the document. Having made a new Planning Officer contact at Somerset County Council (the previous consultee is on maternity leave), we are still awaiting comments from SCC. Once comments have been received, Emma-Jane will arrange for final changes to be made to the document and for it to be formally endorsed by the planning authorities and passed to the JAC for approval.

Recommendations:

1. The JAC notes the report.