



Quantock Hills AONB Service

2012 / 13 Business Plan

2012/13 Business Plan – Setting the Priorities

1. Priority Setting:

- a. In November 2010 the Quantock Hills AONB JAC went through a quick priority setting exercise. This was in response to known reduction in funding from core partners. At the time of the priority setting exercise the level of reduction was unknown but scenarios were run of 5% reduction (best case) to 30% reduction (worst case). Appendix 1 shows the results and will inform the direction of work of the AONB Service.
- b. In November 2011 the Quantock Hills AONB JAC went through another exercise to prioritise the remaining action points from the 2009 – 2014 Management Plan. These action points were grouped into project development, project delivery or research. The JAC prioritised the areas of work into those which should be included in the 2012/13 Business Plan, those that should be deferred until 2013/14 (the final year of the current Management Plan) and those which are no longer a high priority or relevant. Appendix 2 details the areas of work presented and the priority placed upon them.

2. Other drivers:

- a. The AONB Service is still expecting significant reductions in its contributions from all core funders. Defra have set its expected funding for the CSR period with an annual 5.4% reduction in grant over the period (until 2014/15) with local authority partners working on an annual basis. The reductions in funding requires the AONB Service to investigate a different business or operations model. This work began in 2011/12 with the setting up of a working group of the Quantock Hills JAC, the Future Directions Working Group. The group has created an adaptation plan (appendix 3) which will investigate a mix of 'belt-tightening', income generation and operational changes to ensure a sustainable partnership continues into the future.
- b. Due to the reduction of government grant to local authorities Somerset County Council, host to the Quantock Hills AONB, is undertaking a full review of services. The aim of this change programme is to make SCC smaller, more flexible and more 'customer led'. The service in which the AONB is embedded is due for review in November 2012. Potential outcomes of the review include, stopping funding and support for the AONB (worst case), reduction in funding or withdrawing as host authority. SCC has just started to implement its change programme and it is uncertain at this stage of their approach over partnerships and hosted organisations.
- c. Though only 3 years into the current AONB Management Plan (2009/14) the AONB Service will, on behalf of its constituent local authorities, be required to review and have adopted a revised plan by April 2014. At present Defra are indicating a light touch review is required, however the Management Plans are the main tool for ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the AONB (primary purpose) and therefore need to be robust in terms of changing policy and legislation. From previous experience and discussion with other AONBs it is apparent that the review will require an 18 month lead in time which requires it to begin in September 2012.

3. Funding Scenarios

- a. Using the **indicative** figures provided by the Local Authorities and the provisional offer received from Defra we are able to estimate budgets for the CSR period (Table 1). From this we can see an expected reduction in funding from traditional sources of £61,000 over the 4 year period. This equates to a 22% reduction.
- b. By comparing the funding to current core expenditure it is possible to see that there will be a shortfall of £68,880 Over the CSR period. This explicitly shows that, based on the assumptions made, the Quantock Hills AONB Service needs to adapt, either by reducing expenditure, increasing other income streams or changing business / operating model.

Table 1: Future indicative funding 2012 – 14

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
DEFRA	186,877	177,533	168,656	160,224
Somerset County Council	18,500	18,500	18,500	18,500
Sedgemoor District Council	11,550	10,000	8,000	8,000
Taunton Deane Borough Council	12,000	10,000	8,000	8,000
West Somerset Council	11,575	9,956	7,000	6,000
Forestry Commission (recharge)	17,300	17,300	17,300	17,300
Mendip Hills AONB (recharge)	11,000	11,000	0	0
Event Income	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL	280,470	255,289	228,456	219,024
	<i>Yearly Change</i>	<i>25,181</i>	<i>26,833</i>	<i>9,432</i>
	<i>running Balance</i>	<i>25,181</i>	<i>52,014</i>	<i>61,446</i>

Table 2: Future indicative AONB Core Expenditure 2012-14 (based on current staff model)

Assumptions – based on current AONB staff model (inc AONB Man). Not shown £37,000 reserves to cover redundancies, DEFRA grant Max 75% of core exp [Excludes some staff costs where match funding is from exchequer sources]				
Item	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Salaries, NI, SA	170,251	170,251	170,251	170,251
Travel & Training	19,676	19,676	19,676	19,676
Partnership Running Costs	10,180	10,180	10,180	10,180
Partnership Budget	3,100	3,100	3,100	3,100
Other Costs	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500
Total	221,852	221,852	221,852	221,852
Max DEFRA grant (based on eligible core exp)	148,311	148,311	148,311	148,311
Max DEFRA grant (based on match income)	163,875	148,368	127,500	124,500
Balance (based on Max DEFRA grant available)	9,384	4,215	34,552	38,552

4. Delivery Mechanisms

- a. Due to the reduction in core funding the AONB Service will base the 2012/13 Business Plan on the following:

- i. AONB Manager to extend secondment to Somerset County Council for a further 9 months, returning in January 2013.
 - ii. Development Officer to remain as Acting AONB Manager for a further 9 months, returning to the Development Officer post in January 2013.
 - iii. Other AONB Staff posts to remain, though work prioritise will shift e.g. Ranger to prioritise promoted routes work over general rights of way.
 - iv. 'on-the-ground' delivery will decrease as resource will be used to develop projects and other income streams
 - v. Resource will be allocated to the Management Plan review. This will mainly be through the AONB Manager but will also include the Landscape Planning Officer and Communications Officer. Other staff will be involved in the process during 2013/14.
- b. Longer term the delivery mechanism will be informed by the Future Directions work. It is apparent that the existing staff structure is not affordable if changes are not made.

Table 3 AONB team structure 2012/13.

Existing AONB Team	FTE	Function
AONB Manager	1	Day to day management of the team, developing AONB policy, commenting on behalf of JAC on statutory consultations and ensuring good working practices with all partnerships. Lead on Management Plan review and Future Directions.
Development Officer	0	POST CURRENTLY FROZEN UNTIL RTN OF AONB MANAGER DUE 1 st JANUARY 2013
Landscape Planning Officer	0.4	This post develops guidance on planning and links with the local planning authorities to ensure that any development is sensitive to the needs of the AONB landscape.
Ranger	1	Key role is recreation and access, heritage and land management. Also undertakes project development and delivery, especially working with local communities.
Partnership Ranger (shared)	0.5	Key role includes habitat and biodiversity delivery, events management and delivery, management of H&S for team, Also undertakes delivery on SCC amenity land and visitor management
Volunteer Coordinator (shared)	0.6	To develop volunteering opportunities, including enhancement of the existing joint Quantock volunteer group.
Communication Officer	0.4	Role includes producing all literature, digital media, managing the AONB website and dealing with media enquiries
Support Officer	0.6	Role includes administration, finance, secretariat to working groups
Total FTE	4.5	

5. Quantock Hills budget 2012/13

- a. Table 4 shows the budget for 2012/13 based indicative contributions supplied by the AONB partners at the November Officers Working Group. The funding will not be confirmed until February 2012 by local authority funding partners. Defra have confirmed their 2012/13 grant at £176,249, subject to a successful grant application. A full budget can be found in Appendix 4.
- b. The budget concentrates on delivery through staffing and the development of volunteering. Project development will look to attract external funding for projects identified in the action plan (section 4). Further work will be undertaken to develop an alternative delivery model for the AONB Partnership and Team to reduce reliance on exchequer funding.
- c. As a condition of the Statement of Intent (a requirement of the Defra grant) the AONB Service is required to hold an earmarked reserve which is to be used in the event of redundancies. This removes further financial liability from the partners. This is shown as a separate budget line and is not available as discretionary funds. The reserve has come from non-exchequer sources and was secured by postponing a number of projects in 2011/12.
- d. The budget will deliver the Action Plan (Sc 6) which will work to the priorities identified in Sc 1. To this extent a SDF is included of £22,000 as well as continued funding for a Volunteer Coordinator post and funding for volunteer activities.
- e. The budget currently shows no income from Somerset County Council for management of their Amenity Land sites. Somerset County Council is currently reviewing their amenity land estate with the aim of reducing their liabilities. Currently the review has identified 3 amenity land sites for disposal (8 acres, Thorncombe and Over Stowey Customs Common). Cothelstone Hill has been declared as non-surplus. As Cothelstone Hill requires the greatest input there is still a requirement to ascertain how the AONB Service will recover costs and this is being investigated.
- f. The budget shows no income against other land management. This is primarily the swaling which the AONB Service undertakes on Quantock Common SSSI. Swaling is a conservation management tool used on heathland. The AONB Service has previously undertaken this with no recharge to the landowner or commoners association. 2011/12 was the last season where this service was provided with no recharge. For 2012/13 the AONB Service will operate a cost recovery system, though not necessarily full-cost, for any scheme where it is asked to undertake the swaling.
- g. The Mendip Hills AONB recharge is for the Volunteer Coordinator post. This is a joint post with Quantock and Mendip Hills AONB. Quantock Hills will retain budget and line management with day to day supervision undertaken by the local AONB officer.

Table 4: Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget 2012 – 13

INCOME	Core	Project	Total	EXPENDITURE	£	
DEFRA	153,231	23,000	176,231	CORE		
Somerset County Council	21,500	0	21,500	AONB Manager	43,442	Acting up with rtn due Jan 2013
Forestry Commission (recharge)	17,300	0	17,300	Deve'T Officer	7,713	3mths Jan – Mar 2013
Taunton Deane Borough Council	9,900	100	10,000	Landscape Planning Off	15,103	
Sedgemoor District Council	9,940	60	10,000	Ranger	37,682	
West Somerset Council	9,956		9,956	Partnership Ranger	31,737	Shared post with FC
Mendip Hills AONB (recharge)	11,000	0	11,000	Volunteer Coordinator	23,542	Shared post with Mendip Hills
Events income	1,000	0	1,000	Comms Officer	10,279	
RIA		840	840	Support Assistant	10,557	
TOTAL	233,827	24,000	257,827	Accommodation	10,745	
				Travel & Training	19,526	
Income	257,827			Partnership running cost	10,200	
Expenditure	257,827			Partnership Budget	7,100	
<i>Balance</i>	<i>0</i>			Other costs	6,200	
				Total	233,827	
Carry forward (2011/12)	37,000			PROJECTS		
Earmarked Reserves	37,000			SDF	22,000	
				Woodlands for Wildlife	0	Funded through Phase I & regional pot
				LNR scoping & delivery	0	Sites to be funded through SDF & private
				Quantock Orchards	0	In-kind contribution. External funded
				Oral History Phase II	2,000	
				Hilltop Monitoring Project	0	No identified expenditure
				Total	24,000	
				Total Expenditure	257,827	

6. Action Plan 2012/13

- a. The Action Plan below identifies delivery against NE core duties of an AONB, [Appendix 5](#), Management Plan Action Point Delivery and Core Duties delivery, such as line management. Against the delivery is an assessment of AONB resources required by post and number of days. With some delivery there will be more than one post associated with delivery, but the first post listed will be the lead on that item of work. Table 5 Identifies 3 headline areas of work the AONB Service will be undertaking during 2012/13. Table 6 is the full action plan.

Table 5: Our top 3 headline work areas

Activity	Resource
<p>Quantock Farming Fringes Project. Now is an ideal opportunity to assess and strengthen the various elements of the Quantock Hills fringe farmland as landownership is still retained by a relatively small number of landowners meaning that significant project work can be delivered across much of the project area. By undertaking the project we will be able to increase the appreciation of the farmland fringe in the context of the landscape as a whole and increase the understanding of the linkages of the various landscape elements such as commons, formal parkland and farmed land.</p>	<p>Staff resource. Some funding required for evidence provision for 1st stage bid.</p>
<p>Heathland Bird Survey. Carry out heathland bird survey for Quantock Common SSSI. A survey conducted in partnership with RSPB and others to ascertain populations of birds, both heathland specialists such as the Dartford Warbler and generalists, such as the Yellowhammer. The survey will be comparable to previous surveys (2000 & 2006) and will allow general trends in species and populations to be ascertained. The output of the survey will be a report which will be available in electronic format. The outcome of the survey will be increased understanding of bird populations on the Quantock Common SSSI and the ability to inform more accurate land management under a new Environmental Stewardship Scheme</p>	<p>Partners: AONB Service, RSPB, National Trust, Natural England. Limited funding require. Large volunteer resource required.</p>
<p>Landscape and Planning Seminar. The first of what is hoped to become an annual event rotated around the 3 Somerset AONBs (Quantock Hills, Mendip Hills and Blackdown Hills). The main aim is to improve engagement with the relevant Local Authorities, including planning, transport, landscape and biodiversity officers and other relevant organisations & groups. Each year will be themed allowing for relevant changes in policy and legislation to be thoroughly discussed and the impacts upon AONBs to be understood. The first seminar will be all encompassing and provide scene setting where issues generic to all AONBs can be discussed. By having seminars open to more officers and organisations it will be wider reaching and to more people provide catalyst to provide debate.</p>	<p>Staff resource. Accommodation and hospitality costs.</p>

Key:

AM	AONB Manager	DO	Development Officer	LP	Landscape Planner
R	Ranger	PR	Partnership Ranger	VC	Volunteer Coordinator
CO	Communications Officer	SA	Support Assistant		
Other Resource includes other organisations that will be assisting with action. Highlighted resources are yet to confirm or contacted regarding involvement.					

Table 6 Quantock Hills AONB Service 2012/13 Action Plan

Defra duty	ACTION POINT	Action	Milestone / Target	AONB resource Post (days)	Partners
A		Begin review of Quantock Hills AONB Service Management Plan.	Complete review timetable, initial assessments such as EIA, SA etc	AM (10)	JAC, others as required
G		Develop stage 1 bid for a landscape scale project encompassing the farmland fringes of the Quantock Hills	Stage 1 bid complete and submitted	AM (10) LP (2)	NE, NT, others
C E	FAP 2	Collate monitoring information of uptake of CSS / ES / EWGS etc. Influence HLS targeting for major areas of semi-natural land on the Quantock Hills.	ES data provided to AONB unit from NE. 75% of eligible AONB land area in ES. Evidence of appropriate targeting in Quantock ES schemes.	AM (1)	Natural England (Lead)
C	FWAP 4	Comment on draft SAC Woodland Management Plan to ensure plan will bring greatest benefit to subsequent management	Comments received and actioned	PR (1)	Natural England (lead)
C F	WAP 4	Support continued monitoring of LBAP species (adder) to inform future management plans for Quantock Common and surrounding agricultural land	Adder population and hibernacula survey carried out on 3 sites in Quantock AONB	AM (1)	SRAG (lead), Reaseheath College
C F	WAP 4	Support monitoring of Pied Flycatchers on Quantock Hills and feed into regional project on effects of climate change on indicator species	Monitoring of 150 boxes in key locations throughout AONB	PR (5)	Exeter University (lead), BTO, NE
C F	WAP2	Implement or manage implementation by others of the Quantock Hills BAP.	LEO, adder and Heathland bird survey carried out and report produced	PR (10), AM (1)	RSPB, RAGS, NT, SOS
O	WAP2	Provide concise monitoring and reporting on LBAP actions	Produce a LBAP actions report	PR (5)	SERC
C	WAP3	Undertake scoping of potential Local Nature Reserves in the AONB. Identify potential sites, approach landowners and look to work with landowners to develop management plans to ensure sites can be designated as LNRs	Produce scoping report, and look to develop management plans for 50% of identified sites	R (5)	SERC, SWT, SCC
C G F	HAP1 / 5	Orchards Project. Develop and deliver a project which will map historic orchards within and around the AONB. Use historic records to interpret the importance of orchards in the Quantock landscape, both in terms of landscape but also social and biodiversity importance.	Historic orchards mapped (GIS layer). Report on landscape, social and biological importance of orchard produced which will inform Management Plan review and subsequent projects. Exhibition of	AM (1) LP (3)	Bristol University (lead)

			work at Fyne Court		
J	HAP6	Oral History Project. Complete phase II of the oral history project to make results of Phase I of project more accessible. This will include a 10-year anniversary exhibition and development of material easily accessed through the AONB website	Travelling exhibit shown at 5 locations around the Quantock Hills AONB. All interviews transcribed. Photographs and interviews developed into archive for Somerset Heritage Centre	AM (5)	
A B K	DAP 6	Produce an integrated Landscape Character Assessment and environment report that will set the framework to the next Management Plan based on the latest guidance on NCA assessment from NE	Draft report produced ready for consideration by partnership	LP (32) AM (??)	
K	DAP 1 DAP 4 DAP 5	Monitor planning applications in and around the AONB and identify any potential damaging developments. Comment on potentially damaging applications on behalf of the JAC	Planning Database up to date and reporting back against database possible through GIS. Comments sent to relevant planning authorities	LP (18) SA (10)	
K	DAP 2	Engage with Local Development Framework (LDF) consultation	Relevant LDF consultation responses sent	LP (10)	
K	DAP 7	Engage with and offer specialist advice on impacts of major infrastructure developments such as Hinkley Point C	Engagement with consultation process and comments received and acted upon	LP (12)	
E J	DAP4	Make AONB planning comments available on the website (or synopsis with link) to ensure partners and communities can see AONB response to planning application	All planning comments to be upload to AONB Service website within 10 days of submission	LP (5) SA (10)	
B D I	DAP3	Host a Somerset AONBs Planning Seminar to engage relevant local authority officers with aim of reminding / educating about AONB	1 seminar held with 50% attendance of those invited.	LP (??) SA (??)	
J		VOLUNTEERS – Continued engagement with Quantock Countryside Volunteers ensuring tasks occurring through AONB area.	3,000 volunteer hours completed.	VC (35) R (20)	
J	ARAP 8 VAP 2	VOLUNTEERS - Volunteer involvement in local events and other visitor management to raise AONB profile and provide information.	30 volunteer work days spent at local events or engaged in visitor management activity	VC R	
J	EAP 6	VOLUNTEERS - Development of a volunteer scheme which will involve young people in monitoring, management and decision making on the Quantock Hills AONB	Bid for external funding written and submitted	VC	
C J	CAP 1	Deliver Sustainable Development Fund to fund local projects which will deliver Management Plan objectives. Prime funding of SDF for 2012/13 will be 'Wild Places Competition'.	Fully expenditure against SDF with project targets being fully met	AM VC	SDF Panel
D G	CAP 3	Engagement with Western Somerset Local Action Group to ensure funding opportunities through this scheme are available for Quantock projects.	Quantock Hills AONB Service retains place on executive meeting and attends	AM (2)	

J	CAP 6	Encourage and practically support parish initiatives such as parish plans in and around the AONB to help local communities protect the character of their villages and ensure local distinctiveness is integral to the local community	Development of Parish Plans or other relevant initiatives supported by AONB Service	R (8)	
C F	FWAP 2 CAP 2	Support of the Western Somerset Woodlands Project which aims to work with woodland owners and workers to strengthen local supply chains and maximise biodiversity and business opportunities.	Project running with project officer in post. Targets as project plan but include woodland Management Plans, creation of woodland associations etc.	AM (2)	FWAG (lead), Silvanus Trust
C F	FWAP 2 CAP 2	Develop Woodlands for Wildlife Project as successor to Western Somerset Woodland Project. Aim of project will be to continue woodland management work through Community Supported Forestry possibly on regional scale	Project developed with funding bids submitted.	AM (10)	SWPLF, FWAG South West,
C J	WAP 1	Provide secretariat and support for Quantock Commons Management Group (QCMG) and Quantock Police & Conservation Agencies Working Group (QPCAWG)	2 meetings of each group. Meeting notes and progress on actions recorded	SA (4) PR (2) R (2)	
C J	WAP 4	Provide on the ground support to the Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group (QDMCG) deer count	Deer Count undertaken and results fed back to QDMCG and JAC	PR (4) R (1)	
B	VAP 2	Provide 18 events open to the public, including specialist walks and events aimed at families.	300 people attending AONB events		Other leaders (6)
B	VAP 2	Monitor non-AONB event use of the Quantock Hills AONB to provide evidence of use and provide guidance to event organisers to minimise impact of events on the AONB	Assess all event forms received and provide comment / guidance where necessary	PR (5)	
B	EAP 2	Distribute AONB Visitor Guide through the LIPs distribution points	Restocking of LIPs distribution points x 4	CO (7)	
B		AONB Service attendance at 3 local shows / events to promote the AONB Service and provide information to local communities	3 x local shows attended – 1 in each district.	SA (3) CO (3) AM (2) VC (2) LP (1)	
B	EAP 2	Publish and distribute e-newsletter. Hardcopy can be printed off for distribution through schools	At least 4 newsletters produced with distribution to 1,100 individuals	CO (16)	
B	EAP 3	Regularly update the website to include blogs, news items, planning comments etc	New content to be added on at least a fortnightly basis	CO (22)	
B		Produce media content (press release direct media contact) to include standard messages (lambing, ticks etc) as well as specific project successes	12 press releases sent out with 50% picked up by local media	CO (15)	
E		Produce and distribute a annual report to show progress against AONB Management Plan Targets	Annual Report produced and distributed by end of June 2012	AM (3), CO (8)	
E I		OWG and JAC reports produced. These reports will provide monitoring against the action plan targets	3 OWG reports and 3 JAC reports produced.	AM (6)	

D G		Develop new 'business delivery model' that can co-exist with the AONB Service but which will reduce reliance on exchequer funding while allowing continued or enhanced delivery of the Statutory Management Plan. This will be overseen by a Funding & Delivery Working Group made up of 2 JAC members, officers and 2 others.	Options paper produced and favoured option agreed by partnership	AM (120)	
D		Write /DEFRA AONB bid with input from OWG and JAC partnership	DEFRA bid accepted	AM (5)	
J		Host 4 OWG and JAC meetings – April, July, November and February 2013 to allow informed and engaged ownership of partnership by JAC.	4 meetings held.	AM (4) PR (2) R (2) VC (1) LP (2)	
J		Regular meetings of AONB Service team to review AONB Management activities and issues	45 meetings held.	All team 2 days each	
H		Membership and involvement in the NAAONB and SWPLF to ensure national and regional liaison and to ensure that the NAAONB represents the views of the Quantock Hills partnership in its new business model. – Includes Countryside Management Association	Attendance at Lead Officers meetings and other meetings where applicable	AM (15)	
F		Undertake fixed point photography monitoring on 12 sites to provide a visual record of landscape and change over time including views into and from the AONB	Take photographs from 12 sites twice during 2012/13.	R (6), VC (2), AM (1)	
F	VAP 8	Collect bi-annual data from 15 visitor counters installed through the Quantock Hills and disseminate information to partners	Information collected, processed and disseminated. Information in format to be used as evidence in funding bids	AM (4)	
C		Provide support to the 1SW off-road cycling project with officer time for the collection of local data and input into route description as a visitor management tool	Officer time allocated and routes data vetted and agreed by AONB	AM (2)	
B	VAP 1	Engage with event organisers to ensure notification of events occurring on the hills. Offer advice to ensure minimal adverse impact from events to the landscape, tranquillity and natural environment of the Quantock Hills	Creation of events database. Event monitoring information available to landowners / interested people	PR (8) CO (6)	
B	VAP 2	Ensure on the ground presence during busy periods to engage visitors and provide information.	24 days patrol throughout year, with volunteer involvement	R (25) PR (5)	
D	VAP 5	Completion of flytipping database with hotspots provided to local authorities and negotiate a enhanced level of service to ensure waste is cleaned quickly	Database finalised and sent to local authorities. Agreement from local authorities to clear flytipping	R (10)	
C	ARAP 4	Limit vehicle damage to hilltop tracks through engagement with user groups.	Access agreement in place with main user groups	R (2)	
C	ARAP 4	Develop erosion monitoring project using volunteer involvement. Aim will be to provide evidence of increase or decrease in erosion of main hilltop tracks to Natural England	Project brief developed with relevant staff and volunteers trained. 2 rounds of monitoring	R (??)	

		and other statutory agencies.	completed		
	CORE DUTIES				
	H&S	Annual risk assessment reviews, instigate new H&S procedures in line with good practice. Audits of promoted routes and carry out safety works (VAP 6)		AM (1) PR (5) VC (5) R (30)	
	Finance	Undertake finance monitoring and provide reports in various formats to partners, hosts and grant giving organisations		AM (5)	
	Support Activities	Undertake a range of support activities such as answering enquiries, filing, procurement etc		SA (110)	
	Line Mgt	1-1 management meetings, annual PRaD meetings staff management		AM (15)	
	Land Mgt	Manage on behalf of SCC amenity land sites including animal welfare checks, income generation (HLS, SPS)	Successful claiming of CSS & SPS. New HLS & EWGS applications submitted and approved	AM (3), PR (10), R (7)	
	Land Mgt	Undertake swaling programme agreed by QCMG for enhancement of Quantock Common SSSI	Agreed swaling programme completed. Income generation required for AONB Service to undertaken action	PR (10), R (10)	

Appendix 1: Priority Setting Work –

1. Quantock Hills Partnership Prioritise. In November 2010 the Quantock Hills JAC undertook an exercise to prioritise the areas of work it felt the AONB Service should undertake in light of reduced resources (funding and staffing). The table below (A1.1) shows the prioritise.

Table A1.1 Priority work for the AONB Service:

Action	Partnership Priority	Mgt Plan Priority	G'ment Priority	Overall Priority	Response
SDF	High	High		High	NEED TO DO
Planning – Strategic development	High	High		High	
Volunteer Development	High	High	High ¹	High	
Volunteer Tasks	High	High	High ¹	High	
Amenity Land – <i>if income received</i>	High	-		High (with income)	
Wildlife - Monitoring	Medium	High	High ²	High	
Wildlife – Enhancement	Medium	High	High ²	High	
Facilitating – Local communities	High	High	High ¹	High	
Event – Others	High	Low		Medium	TRY TO DO, INVESTIGATE ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DOING
Planning – Development Management	Medium	High		Medium	
Planning – Local / Regional Consultation	Medium	High		Medium	
Visitor Mgt	High	Low		Medium	
Other Land Mgt – <i>if income received</i>	Medium	-		Medium (with income)	
Event – AONB	Medium	Low		Medium	
Education	Medium	High		Medium	
Information Provision	Medium	High		Medium	
Consultation	Medium	High		Medium	
Facilitating – Agriculture	Low	High		Medium	
Facilitating – Forestry	Low	High		Medium	
Climate Change	Low	Low		Low	DO NOT DO UNLESS THROUGH EXTERNAL FUNDING AND/OR RESOURCES
Rights of Way	Low	Low		Low	
Open Access	Low	Low		Low	
Coast & Geology	Low	Low		Low	
Heritage & Local Distinctiveness	Low	Low		Low	
Traffic & Country Lanes	Low	Low		Low	

Note 1. In his letter to the NAAONB Richard Benyon, MP stated that AONBs 'have a fundamental role in meeting our [Governments] environmental objectives and delivering big society.'

Note 2. The Lawton Review 'Making space for Nature' reported to SoS for Environment and DEFRA in September. Sc 6.3.2 makes specific recommendations on National Parks and AONBs stating that '...these [National Parks and AONBs] provide an excellent base for delivering a more effective ecological network, not least because their legal standing, governance and management plans provide a basis for coordinated action to integrate effective ecological networks with landscape and other uses...'

Note 3. Other duties are not covered under these headings such as budget and line management. Also does not show where other AONB staff support lead in delivery.

Appendix 2: Business Plan 2012 / 13 Priority Delivery.

The JAC undertook a priority setting exercise, November 2011, to enable completion of the outstanding action points from the 2009-14 Management Plan. The AONB Service had packaged the Action Points into 15 project development, project delivery or research areas of work which were considered during the exercise.

Table A2.1: Feedback from JAC workshop

Feedback	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Areas of work for inclusion in the 2012/13 Business plan	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11	2, 3, 5, 10, 11	1, 3, 4
Area of work for inclusion in the 2013/14 Business plan	8, 9, 10	4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15	2, 6, 11, 13
Areas of work not to be taken forward	6, 12, 14, 15		7, 8, 10
Areas of work where no decision was presented	13	1, 6, 7, 9	5, 9, 12, 14, 15

Table A2.2: Comments received.

Group	Comment
3	Can areas of work 1, 3 & 4 be accommodated together
3	For area of work 13 consider a different approach – i.e. JAC rep take forward to release some AONB staff resource.

Table A2.3: Priority Areas of work: From the feedback above the AONB Service will prioritise the following areas of work in the 2012 / 13 Business Plan. These may change as the AONB Service receives greater clarity over funding during the coming months.

Ref 1: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: Develop Woodlands for Wildlife project as successor to Western Somerset Woodlands Project. The project development will involve AONB Service staff developing a project for external funding along with other partner organisations possibly on a regional scale. The aim of the project will be to increase the biodiversity value of small woodlands through sustainable management and creation of economic markets. Costs associated with specialist advice.

Ref 2: PROJECT DELIVERY: Scope potential sites suitable for candidate Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and working with owners develop management plans for submission. Desk and site study to scope candidate sites with follow up contact with landowners. Further work undertaken to draw together management plans. Costs associated with specialist work such as ecological surveys.

Ref 3: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: Look to develop landscape scale project with partners that will encompass the farmland fringe (approx 65% of AONB area). The aim is to increase understanding of the farmland fringe and its importance in the Quantocks context, furthering knowledge and appreciation and providing funding for restoration and enhancement of the landscape. Will require resource from a number of AONB staff but successful application could lead to landscape scale project with many partners and good opportunities for volunteer / local community engagement and action. Project would also provide funding mechanism for landscape enhancement of farmland fringe at a time when Environmental Stewardship is decreasing. Costs associated with specialist data provision usually required for funding applications

Ref 4: PROJECT DELIVERY: Working in partnership with educational establishment, such as University of Bristol, undertake research project to identify historic and present orchard locations in the Quantock area. Use the research to develop guidance and inform decision makers, such as informing the Management Plan Review, in partnership with other projects (e.g. South Somerset Orchards Project) where applicable. Opportunity to involve volunteers, especially in field work and surveys. Costs associated with expenses and materials for researcher.

Ref 5: PROJECT DELIVERY: Deliver phase two of the oral history project to increase opportunity to access recordings and outputs from phase 1 of project. Project could operate at larger scale by working in partnership with other organisations. Costs associated with developing output mechanisms, such as website or digital conversion.

Ref 10: PROJECT DELIVERY: Enhance access provision through installation of a limited number of waymarking posts at key locations, sensitively located, to aid visitor management. AONB Service approach is to re-instate historic posts where appropriate (e.g. bicknoller post) or install posts where there would be no or minimal impact on the landscape. Work with Somerset County Council Rights of Way group and others where appropriate. Costs associated with materials and contractor costs

Ref 11: PROJECT DELIVERY: Working with volunteers develop and deliver a project to monitor erosion of hilltop tracks. Where possible through historic records provide evidence of trends to inform visitor management policies and Management Plans reviews. Work will compliment existing quantitative monitoring (visitor counters) undertaken by AONB Service. Costs associated with specialist equipment.

Table A2.4: Areas of work to be carried forward for inclusion in the 2013/14 Business Plan:

Ref 8: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: Support development of a sustainability plan for Fyne Court, with the National Trust (owners of the site). Involvement due to AONB Office location on site and increased efficiency of site will benefit AONB Service. The plan will make recommendations and identify funding sources to ensure the project is realised. No costs identified during development phase.

Ref 13: PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: Develop highway protocol between Somerset County Council (highways) and the Quantock Hills JAC. The aim of the protocol will be to create a positive working relationship with a set of shared principles, an agreed approach for consultation which will ultimately reduce the impact of road signs on the landscape. No costs associated at this stage.

Appendix 3: Quantock Hills Future Directions Adaptation Plan (v1.2)

Action	1a. Review working relationship and partnership sign up			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
IP	Statement of Intent drafted by end July. Consultation August & September. Signing late October 2011	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of loss of DEFRA grant if not having signed MoU or Sol in place. • Lack of clarity over partners commitment to partnership and ability to plan into future 	Quantock Hills core funders agree Sol as preferred option at July OWG. WSC not present so separate meeting held beginning of August.

Action	1b. Review role and responsibility of parish council reps			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
IP	End December 2011.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement of role not achievable under current JAC • Disagreement over wider parish council communication 	Set up meeting with Parish Reps and agreed better dissemination of information and wider role.

Action	2. Evaluate hosting arrangement to include continued hosting by LA partner or non LA partner. Evaluate current hosting arrangement against potential hosting by other LA or non-LA partners. As part of evaluation look at requirement of host to buy into services (such as IT).			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
IP	Evaluation done March 2012, implementation from April 2012 onwards	Efficiency savings (staff resource currently used for back office functions. £ savings likely to be low.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA partners requirement for Government Connect – Reduced efficiency • LA partner may not wish to host AONB due to liability issues. • Support Services (HR, payroll etc) likely to cost more external to LA hosting • SmartOffice could lead to loss of AONB identity or potential loss of external office 	<p>a. Current mgt fee £3k payable to SCC. Other costs, such as IT, will be payable to host or external. May be some savings</p> <p>b. Tied into hosts T&C and policies (such as non-recruitment) which can lead to reduced efficiency of team and loss of flexibility. Non cost issues need to be considered.</p> <p>c. Consider asset transfer.</p>

Action	3. Evaluate other delivery mechanism to deliver Quantock Hills JAC Management Plan. Define potential mechanisms, establish criteria and assess against these, define steps to realisation of preferred delivery mechanism			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
IP	Produce options for consideration at November JAC meeting	Significant but could also lead to drop in delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing option presents real risk of decreased delivery. • Ill considered option could lead to 	<p>a. Many models / options to consider</p> <p>b. Could include hybrid with current AONB Service retaining some functions while others are</p>

			reduced delivery and/or increased costs	outsourced c. Out sourced provided by who? Lack of other delivery partners? d. Ensure linkage with other AONBs / SWPLF work e. Potential conflict with hybrid partners f. Increases potential for income generation g. Needs to be assessed with actions 4 and 5 to ensure correct resource mgt
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Action	4. Sharing resources (staff / services). Evaluate opportunities and define potential services to sell and buy and to whom.			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
IP	Dec 2011. Complete evaluation. Start transition Apr 2012	Potential savings in staff costs. Potential for income generation if selling services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of service resource if income generation becomes overarching objective • Reduced efficiency of shared posts vs. greater synergies between organisations • Reduced delivery due to flexibilities • Contract Management requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Includes planning, GIS, communications, Man Plan Reviews, project development, admin, finance, b. Shared staff, buying in or selling services c. Can look at other AONBs regionally, ENPA or other organisations d. Current model includes shared posts with FC and Mendip Hills AONB.

Action	5. Procurement of Services. Review options for provision of services including IT and other possible back office functions.			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
IP	Receive costed options by Oct 2011. Implementation by March 2012	Increased efficiency. Potential for minor cost savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted ability to opt out of host authority services • Contract management • Ensure robust back up service provided • Decreased efficiencies if host authority still providing other services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Other AONBs currently doing this or considering. May be savings in regional contract b. Greater identity and efficiency in separate IT. c. Vehicle leasing and service considerable cost. Need to include this in any assessment.

Action	6. Income Generation – Engage with national / AONB contract to identify opportunities. Also look at work undertaken on behalf of specific organisations and opportunities for income generation.			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
DD	Commissioning report mid Sept. Contract let October 2011. Report back spring 2012?	Contribution to national contract £600 (agreed by FDWG). Potential for income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current staffing unit does not have capacity to undertake this work in required timescale • Uncertainty over regional role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Different from cost recovery b. Requires different business model to achieve potential c. Poor response from initial approach to Parish

		generation (rather than cost recovery).	(SWPLF) which currently provides intelligence on opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If timescale of work and implementation is too long (>12mths) risk of redundancies to existing staff unit due to reducing core funding. 	Councils. Needs further consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor payback – Quantocks does not have critical mass – need to work with LA or ENPA for wider geographical area Selling services, fees etc to be looked at. Wiser grant applications to include claw back of time spent on project.
IP	December 2011.	Reduction in staff resource, required for certain areas of work, which would be released. Potential for income generation rather than cost recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different partners expectations / requirements of AONB Service Decision could be forced upon AONB by other partners, e.g. SCC amenity land review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas to consider, amenity land management, commons land management Income generation would require different business model. These areas not seen as traditional AONB areas of work, though Quantocks has long history and expertise in this type of work

Action	7. Political Mandate – Raise awareness among politicians (all levels) of functions, context, importance and benefits of AONB partnerships and joint working			
Lead	Target date	£ implication	Risk	Notes
All	On-going, but needs to influence budget setting at LA level for Oct 2011	Loss of LA funding Loss of national government support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reputation if not able to deliver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political mandate at local level needs strengthening. Work with OWG to ensure facts / figures in most appropriate form are available Build / expand on linkages to national government policy (localism, big society etc) Environment white paper – AONBs as delivery mechanism. Check English Biodiversity Strategy when it comes out NPPF – Concern expressed from AONBs / other organisations. Does it pose a threat?

Appendix 4: Quantock Hills AONB Service – detailed budget 2012 / 13

CORE - Expenditure	2011 12	2012 13	Income	Core	Project	total
Salaries	160,619	180,056	DEFRA	153,231	£23,000	176,231
Training et al	2,000	2,400	FC	17,300	0	17,300
Electricity	200	200	Mendips (recharge)	11,000	0	11,000
Rates	900	900	SCC	21,500	0	21,500
Rent of Room	8,645	9,245	WSC	9,956	£0	9,956
Water Charges	400	400	TDBC	9,900	100	10,000
Car allowance	4,300	4,300	SDC	9,940	60	10,000
Hired Transport	0	50	Events	1,000	0	1,000
Travel costs	500	500	Misc income	0	840	840
Vehicle costs - Fuel	3,340	3,340	Total	233,827	£24,000	257,827
Vehicle costs - Insurance	1,150	1,150	Expenditure			
Vehicle costs - Maintenance	1,820	1,820	Core	233,827		
Vehicle costs - Lease	7,786	7,786	SDF	22,000		
Equipment et al	6,530	4,180	Project	2,000		
Literature & Pubs	1,200	1,200	Total	257,827		
shows & Exhib	3,200	700	Balance	0		
Clothing & Uniform	150	200				
R & D	7,000	5,200				
Photocopying	700	700				
Stationary	1,500	1,500				
Postage	300	300				
Telephones	1,300	1,300				
Subs allowance	100	100				
Hospitality	700	700				
Subscriptions	2,250	2,500				
Insurance	80	100				
Cross Service recharge	3,000	3,000				
TOTAL CORE	£219,670	£233,827				

Defra funding categories	
Training & travel	
Accommodation	
Partnership Running Costs	
Partnership Budget	
Other Costs	

Appendix 5: Defra's Core duties of an AONB Unit

Core function	Explanation
a) Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the CRoW Act AONB Management Plan	The management plan is the most significant statutory duty placed upon Local Authorities and in turn AONB managers by the 2000 CRoW Act. Its preparation and review should involve local stakeholders.
b) Raising awareness of the AONB, and promoting the AONB vision and the management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside	Raising awareness of the AONB and its special characteristics. Promoting the partnership's vision of the AONB's future and the plan for securing it. The output could be a glossy publication, a series of promotional events, a local media campaign or any combination of these. The vision needs to explain why the AONB is important and why special management measures are needed to protect and enhance it.
c) Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan	Taking positive steps to support the implementation of the actions in the management plan including getting other local and regional stakeholders to play their part too. It will be important to assess performance locally of CRoW Act 'relevant bodies' in respect section 85 of the Act.
d) Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service(attain the highest possible standards) in countryside management	This is a nationally significant landscape attracting central as well as local government resources for its continued protection. LA countryside management, rights of way, planning, and other relevant services affecting it need to be encouraged to "go the extra mile" to conserve, enhance and celebrate the special qualities of the AONB in decision making and through prioritising funding to ensure investment in ongoing sensitive management.
e) Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets	At the end of the year a published report on progress and achievement of the AONB team against agreed targets is needed. It will enable you to claim credit for success, and can be used to assure funders that AONB funds are being well used and to support fundraising efforts.
f) Monitoring AONB landscape condition	A key activity but one which will run over a long period and will enable an assessment of whether the AONB Management Plan is delivering the LA statutory duty to conserve and enhance the AONB.
g) Accessing resources for management activities	Identifying and making use of a wide range of funding opportunities and securing non financial assistance for the delivery of any AONB purposes.

<p>h) Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, Participating in and promoting joint working between AONBs and across protected landscapes family.</p>	<p>Using training and developmental opportunities (e.g. workshops, seminars, NAAONB conference), sharing good practice. Seeking opportunities for collaborative working with other protected landscapes, Contributing to objectives of the AONB family and protected landscapes as a whole.</p>
<p>i) Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level.</p>	<p>Action and management within the AONB team to ensure provision of a first class service in supporting delivery of AONB purposes. In addition helping where appropriate partners in planning their contribution to delivery of AONB objectives. This could be via their business planning processes and other relevant documents (eg Community plans).</p>
<p>j) Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB</p>	<p>Promoting interest, understanding and involvement in the management of the area amongst communities both inside and outside the AONB, by providing mechanisms through which their views can be heard and acted upon.</p>
<p>k) Providing landscape related planning advice</p>	<p>Influencing planning policies (eg, local development documents) and supplementary guidance such as design guides and development control decisions in line with AONB purposes.</p>