



## Quantock Hills AONB Service

# 2013 / 14 Business Plan



## 2013/14 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 started 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 is beginning to implement its change programme and it is uncertain at this stage of their approach over partnerships and hosted organisations.
- c. The AONB Partnership, on behalf of it's constituent Local Authorities will 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. The initial set up phase of the review started in autumn 2012 and will run throughout the period of this business plan.

### 3. Delivery Mechanisms

- a. Due to the reduction in core funding the AONB Service will base the 2013/14 Business Plan on the following:
  - i. No backfill of Landscape Planning Officer, currently on maternity leave. This will reduce core costs. The activity will be picked up by the AONB Manager, supplemented by consultants for specific areas of work.
  - ii. Other AONB Staff posts to remain, though work prioritise will shift e.g. Ranger to prioritise promoted routes work over general rights of way.
  - iii. 'On-the-ground' delivery will decrease as resource will be used to review the Management Plan, develop projects and other income streams.
  - iv. Resource will be allocated to the Management Plan review. This will mainly be through the AONB Manager but will also include other staff and external stakeholders as required..
- 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 1 AONB team structure 2013/14.

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	1	Develops and delivers the action plan through the AONB team, external contractors and organisations. Seeks external funding opportunities to implement projects which deliver the statutory AONB Management Plan. Develops income streams which will support the funding of the AONB Partnership and Service.
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. POST HOLDER ON MATERNITY LEAVE – DUE TO RETURN JANUARY 2014.
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 events and recreation management and delivery. 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
<b>Total FTE</b>	<b>5.5</b>	

#### 4. Quantock Hills budget 2013/14

- a. Table 2 shows the budget for 2013/14 based indicative contributions supplied by the AONB partners at the November Officers Working Group. The funding will not be confirmed until February 2013 by local authority funding partners. Defra have confirmed their 2013/14 grant at £165,621, subject to a successful grant application. A full budget can be found in Appendix 4.
- b. The budget concentrates on the statutory Management Plan review, delivery through staffing and the development of volunteering. Project development will look to attract external funding for projects identified in the Action Plan (section 5). 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 5) 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. 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 2013/14 the AONB Service will operate a cost recovery system, though not necessarily full-cost, for any scheme where it is asked to undertake 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 2: Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget 2013 – 14 (summary)

Core Expenditure	2012 13	2013 14	Notes
Salaries, NI, SA	173,459	198,095	1
Accommodation	17,295	23,185	2
Training, Travel, vehicles costs	21,446	19,866	3
Partnership Running Costs	14,630	16,200	4
Partnership Budget	2,600	2,320	
<b>Core Expenditure</b>	<b>229,430</b>	<b>259,666</b>	

SDF Expenditure		
Projects	22,000	21,295
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>21,295</b>

Project Expenditure			
Various	25,800	80,300	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,800</b>	<b>80,300</b>	

Amenity Land Expenditure			
Various	13,500	31,500	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>31,500</b>	

INCOME	2012 13	2013 14	Notes
Defra	176,249	165,621	6
SCC	21,500	21,500	6
TDBC	10,000	10,000	6
SDC	11,500	11,500	6
WSC	9,957	9,957	6
SPS + ES	0	8,000	7
Mendip Hills AONB	11,000	11,000	8
FC Contribution	17,300	17,300	8
Events	1,000	1,000	9
<b>Core Income</b>	<b>258,506</b>	<b>255,878</b>	

Ext Project Income			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,800</b>	<b>78,250</b>	5

<b>RIA Brought Forward</b>	<b>74,745</b>	<b>72,222</b>
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SUMMARY			
TOTAL INCOME	350,051	411,350	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	277,230	363,886	
<i>EARMARKED RESERVE</i>	<i>37,000</i>	<i>35,079</i>	10
<b>Surplus / Deficit</b>	<b>35,821</b>	<b>12,385</b>	

**NOTES:**

1 – Increase in salaries due to return of AONB Manager. Savings made as Landscape Planning Officer expected to be on maternity for 8 months of financial year.

2 – Increase due to increase in Management Fee charged by Somerset County Council.

3 – Reduction in training budget and vehicle maintenance costs

4 – Increase in research & development to assist with Management Plan Review and undertake planning consultancy work.

5 – 2 main projects, Invasive Species Control Project and Stepping up to the Market will be externally funded, AONB team input time resource to deliver projects.

6 – Assumed or confirmed contributions based on Statement of Intent signed by all partners 2012.

7 – Estimated cost recovery of AONB Team services for land management activities.

8 – Contribution from partners for shared posts (Partnership Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator) hosted by Quantock Hills AONB.

9 – Income from AONB Events. Based on previous years figures.

10 – Earmarked reserves at level that would cover whole team compulsory redundancy as required by Statement of Intent

11 – Ring fenced budget for management of Somerset County Council land holdings (amenity land) within Quantock Hills

## Action Plan 2013/14

- a. The Action Plan below identifies delivery against Defra core duties of an AONB Unit ([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 3 Identifies 3 headline areas of work the AONB Service will be undertaking during 2013/14. Table 4 is the full action plan.

**Table 3: Our top 3 headline work areas**

Activity	Resource
<b>Review of Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan.</b> The Statutory Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan is required to be reviewed, agreed and adopted by 31 March 2014 (CRoW Act 2000, Sc89). The review will ensure that the Management Plan is fit for purpose and robust for the next 5-year period and will engage all partners as well as wider stakeholders and those with a general interest in the Quantock Hills. A main element will be assessing how the Management Plan links with the recent changes in legislation such as the National Planning Policy Framework.	AONB Manager (50%) with significant input from other team members. Financial resource allocated if consultants required to delivery specific tasks. Input from partners is expected.
<b>Development of Heritage Volunteer Scheme.</b> Working in partnership with English Heritage the aim would be to offer an opportunity to existing and new volunteers to develop a heritage monitoring scheme for the Quantock Hills AONB. This scheme would enable the majority of scheduled monuments within the AONB to be monitored and the data used to set work programmes or tackle any issues that arise. There is the possibility that the group could also undertake practical tasks on the SM, under the direction of English Heritage.	Volunteer Coordinator would lead with support from Development Officer and English Heritage Historic Environment Field Advisor
<b>Delivery of Stepping Up to the Market Project.</b> This partnership project aims to encourage collaborative working in the food and drink sector. This will allow businesses greater opportunities through upscaling the supply chain, giving businesses confidence to engage larger scale organisations. It is also looking at potential enhancing the local produce market through local outlets as well as visitors.	Development Officer will lead the project with significant support from partner organisations, namely West Somerset Council and Somerset County Council

### 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 4 Quantock Hills AONB Service 2013/14 Action Plan

Ref	Defra duty	ACTION POINT	Action	Milestone / Target	AONB resource Post (days)	Partners
1	A		Undertake review of statutory AONB Management Plan to ensure it is fit for purpose for next 5-year period. Consult with stakeholders to ensure their views are encompassed ensuring a fully signed up to Management Plan	Revised AONB Management Plan adopted by local authorities and agreed by statutory stakeholders (NE, EA and EH)	AM (120) LP (10) DO (15) R (4) PR (2) SA (5) CO (4)	JAC, others as required
2	G		Develop stage 1 bid for a landscape scale project encompassing the farmland fringes of the Quantock Hills	Stage 1 bid complete and submitted	DO (50)	NE, NT, others
3	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 (2)	Natural England (Lead)
4	C	FWAP 1 FWAP 3	Deliver a Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES) to undertake works which will prevent or control Phytophthora diseases as a measure to stop the spread of the disease to the lowland heath habitats throughout the Quantock Hills AONB	50Ha of control or follow up work undertaken on invasive species as agreed by Natural England	DO (15)	Natural England
5	C F	WAP 4	Support continued monitoring of important species 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. Bat transects undertaken at 2 location. Dormouse Monitoring at 1 site	DO (8) PR (5) VC (6)	SRAG (lead), Reaseheath College, SBG, Volunteers
6	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	DO (2)	Exeter University (lead), BTO, NE, Volunteers
7	B J	HAP1 / 5	Delivery of Phase 3 of Quantock Orchards Project. Expanding the existing project scope to work collaboratively with the 'Orchard Roots Bristol' project. This phase will explore the links between urban and rural orchards as well as the local influence of orchards on the surrounding communities	Historic & current orchards cover maps provided to parish councils and other relevant organisations. Know you Quantock Orchards event in autumn 2013.	AM (2) CO (5)	Bristol University (lead)
8	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	AM (15) SA (10)	
9	K	DAP 2	Engage with Local Development Framework (LDF) consultation	Relevant LDF consultation responses sent	AM (2) LP (2)	

10	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	SA (10)	
11	J		VOLUNTEERS – Continued engagement with Quantock Countryside Volunteers ensuring tasks occurring through AONB area.	3,000 volunteer hours completed.	VC (45) R (8) PR (8)	
12	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 (2) R (12)	
13	J	EAP 6	VOLUNTEERS - Development of a volunteer scheme which will protect the historic environment and raise awareness of heritage assets	12 Heritage volunteers recruited. 2 x training events held. 1 survey of heritage assets undertaken.	VC (25)	English Heritage
14	J F	WAP 4	VOLUNTEERS – Development of wildlife monitoring volunteer group in partnership with National Trust	2 species transects piloted at 2 locations in the AONB. Training & equipment provided to groups	VC (6) DO (1)	National Trust, BCT, SBG
15	C J	CAP 1	Deliver Sustainable Development Fund to fund local projects which will deliver Management Plan objectives.	Fully expenditure against SDF with project targets being fully met	DO (15)	SDF Panel
16	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	DO (4)	
17	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 (10)	
18	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.	DO (3)	FWAG (lead), Silvanus Trust
19	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.	DO (12)	SWPLF, FWAG South West,
20	C I	CAP2 CAP 3	Lead the Stepping up to the Market Project which will work with the Food and Drink sector to aid collaborative working and encourage local produce into local outlets.	All project outputs delivered	DO (15)	WSC, SCC
21	C J	WAP 1	Provide secretariat and support for Quantock Commons Management Group (QCMG), Quantock Police & Conservation Agencies Working Group (QPCAWG) and Coleridge Way Steering Group (CWSG)	2 meetings of each group. Meeting notes and progress on actions recorded	SA (4) DO (2) R (2) CO (2)	



22	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	R (5) SA (2)	
23	B	VAP 2	Provide 15 events open to the public, including specialist walks and events aimed at families.	300 people attending AONB events	PR (6) DO (6) R (3) CO (2) SA (10)	Other leaders (11)
24	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 Review event notification procedure to ensure fit for purpose	PR (16)	
25	B	EAP 2	Distribute AONB Visitor Guide through the LIPs distribution points	Restocking of LIPs distribution points x 4	CO (4)	
26	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 (2) VC (2) DO (1)	Volunteers
27	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 (8) SA (4)	
28	B	EAP 3	Regularly update the website and social media to include blogs, news items, planning comments etc	New content to be added on at least a weekly basis	CO (43)	
29	B J	EAP 5 EAP 6	Coleridge Campaign. Development of Coleridge theme through promotional work of the AONB, including publicity, development of schools projects and	Pandemonium screening summer 2013 Sign off of Coleridge Way Business Plan by CWSG	CO (7)	
30	B	EAP 2	Produce media content (press release direct media contact) to include standard messages (lambing, ticks etc) as well as specific project successes	6 press releases sent out with 50% picked up by local media	CO (6)	
31	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)	
32	E I		OWG and JAC reports produced. These reports will provide monitoring against the action plan targets	4 OWG reports and 4 JAC reports produced.	AM (6)	
33	D G		Develop new business opportunities through joint working with relevant groups / organisations. Include development of non-exchequer income generation.	Partnership approval for adoption of income streams.	DO (30) AM (5)	
34	D		Write /DEFRA AONB bid with input from OWG and JAC partnership.	DEFRA bid accepted	AM (5)	
35	J		Host 4 OWG and JAC meetings – April, July, November and February 2014 to allow informed and engaged ownership of partnership by JAC.	4 meetings held.	AM (8) DO (4) R (2) PR (2) SA (2) VC (1)	
36	J		Regular meetings of AONB Service team to review AONB Management activities and issues	45 meetings held.	All team 6 days each	

37	H		Membership and involvement in the NAAONB to ensure national and regional liaison and to ensure that the NAAONB represents the views of the Quantock Hills partnership	Attendance at Lead Officers meetings and other meetings where applicable	AM (15) DO (3)	
38	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 during 2013.	DO (2) VC (8)	Volunteers
39	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	DO (1) VC (4)	Volunteers
40	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	Event monitoring information available to landowners / interested people	PR (8) SA (4)	
41	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 (12)	Volunteers
42	C	ARAP 4	Limit vehicle damage to hilltop tracks through engagement with user groups.	Access agreement in place with main user groups	AM (2) R (10)	
43	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 and other statutory agencies.	Project brief developed with relevant staff and volunteers trained. 1 <sup>st</sup> round of monitoring undertaken.	DO (2) VC (8)	Volunteers
		<b>CORE DUTIES</b>				
44		H&S	Annual risk assessment reviews, instigate new H&S procedures in line with good practice.		AM (5)	
45		H&S	Carry out site and promoted route audits and carry out safety works (VAP 6)		R (25)	Volunteers
46		Finance	Undertake finance monitoring and provide reports in various formats to partners, hosts and grant giving organisations		AM (5) DO (5)	
47		Support Activities	Undertake a range of support activities such as answering enquiries, filing, procurement etc		SA (90)	
48		Line Mgt	1-1 management meetings, annual PRaD meetings staff management		AM (20) DO (4)	
49		Land Mgt	Manage on behalf of SCC amenity land sites including animal welfare checks, income generation (HLS, SPS)	Delivery of agreed HLS programme, including claiming HLS & SPS	DO (10), PR (20), R (15) VC (6)	Volunteers
50		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 (20), R (20) VC (2)	Volunteers



## 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	<b>NEED TO DO</b>
Planning – Strategic development	High	High		High	
Volunteer Development	High	High	High <sup>1</sup>	High	
Volunteer Tasks	High	High	High <sup>1</sup>	High	
Amenity Land – <i>if income received</i>	High	-		High (with income)	
Wildlife - Monitoring	Medium	High	High <sup>2</sup>	High	
Wildlife – Enhancement	Medium	High	High <sup>2</sup>	High	
Facilitating – Local communities	High	High	High <sup>1</sup>	High	
Event – Others	High	Low		Medium	<b>TRY TO DO, INVESTIGATE ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DOING</b>
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	<b>DO NOT DO UNLESS THROUGH EXTERNAL FUNDING AND/OR RESOURCES</b>
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 2013 / 14 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.

<b>Ref 1:</b> 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.
<b>Ref 2:</b> 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.
<b>Ref 3:</b> 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)

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

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

<b>Action</b>	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).			
<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>£ implication</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Notes</b>
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"> <li>• LA partners requirement for Government Connect – Reduced efficiency.</li> <li>• LA partner may not wish to host AONB due to liability issues..</li> <li>• Support Services (HR, payroll etc) likely to cost more external to LA hosting.</li> <li>• SmartOffice could lead to loss of AONB identity or potential loss of external office.</li> </ul>	<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&amp;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> <p>SCC Have increased Mgt Fee with little evidence. There will be a requirement to undertake a more urgent review of hosting.</p>

<b>Action</b>	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			
<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>£ implication</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Notes</b>
IP	Produce options for consideration at	Significant but could also lead to drop in delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do nothing option presents real risk of decreased delivery.</li> </ul>	<p>a. Many models / options to consider.</p> <p>b. Could include hybrid with current AONB Service</p>



	November JAC meeting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ill considered option could lead to reduced delivery and/or increased costs.</li> </ul>	<p>retaining some functions while others are outsourced.</p> <p>c. Out sourced provided by who? Lack of other delivery partners?</p> <p>d. Ensure linkage with other AONBs / SWPLF work.</p> <p>e. Potential conflict with hybrid partners.</p> <p>f. Increases potential for income generation.</p> <p>g. Needs to be assessed with actions 4 and 5 to ensure correct resource mgt.</p> <p>Future Directions work identified that most appropriate way forward to achieve greatest inward investment was to work through existing groups. Need to concentrate on this approach while maximising cost recovery through activity.</p>
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<b>Action</b> 4. Sharing resources (staff / services). Evaluate opportunities and define potential services to sell and buy and to whom.				
<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>£ implication</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Notes</b>
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"> <li>• Loss of service resource if income generation becomes overarching objective.</li> <li>• Reduced efficiency of shared posts vs. greater synergies between organisations.</li> <li>• Reduced delivery due to flexibilities.</li> <li>• Contract Management requirement.</li> </ul>	<p>a. Includes planning, GIS, communications, Man Plan Reviews, project development, admin, finance,</p> <p>b. Shared staff, buying in or selling services.</p> <p>c. Can look at other AONBs regionally, ENPA or other organisations.</p> <p>d. Current model includes shared posts with FC and Mendip Hills AONB.</p>

<b>Action</b> 5. Procurement of Services. Review options for provision of services including IT and other possible back office functions.				
<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>£ implication</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Notes</b>
IP	Receive costed options by Oct 2011. Implementation by March 2012.	Increased efficiency. Potential for minor cost savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted ability to opt out of host authority services.</li> <li>• Contract management.</li> <li>• Ensure robust back up service provided.</li> <li>• Decreased efficiencies if host authority still providing other services.</li> </ul>	<p>a. Other AONBs currently doing this or considering. May be savings in regional contract.</p> <p>b. Greater identity and efficiency in separate IT.</p> <p>c. Vehicle leasing and service considerable cost. Need to include this in any assessment.</p> <p>Currently re-leasing vehicles. ICT tied to local authority under their procurement contract with SW1. Unable to 'opt-out'.</p>

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<b>Action</b>	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.			
<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>£ implication</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Notes</b>
DD	Commissioning report mid Sept. Contract let October 2011. Report back spring 2012?	Contribution to national contract £600 (agreed by FDWG). Potential for income generation (rather than cost recovery).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current staffing unit does not have capacity to undertake this work in required timescale.</li> <li>• Uncertainty over regional role (SWPLF) which currently provides intelligence on opportunities.</li> <li>• If timescale of work and implementation is too long (&gt;12mths) risk of redundancies to existing staff unit due to reducing core funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Different from cost recovery.</li> <li>b. Requires different business model to achieve potential.</li> <li>c. Poor response from initial approach to Parish Councils. Needs further consultation.</li> <li>d. Visitor payback – Quantocks does not have critical mass – need to work with LA or ENPA for wider geographical area.</li> <li>e. Selling services, fees etc to be looked at.</li> <li>f. Wiser grant applications to include claw back of time spent on project.</li> </ul> <p>Report complete. Looking at ‘Friends of’ groups / trusts as way to achieve donations and membership. This could work on regional or local level. Assessed as not appropriate for QHAONB due to existing Friends of group.</p>
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"> <li>• Different partners expectations / requirements of AONB Service.</li> <li>• Decision could be forced upon AONB by other partners, e.g. SCC amenity land review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Areas to consider, amenity land management, commons land management.</li> <li>b. Income generation would require different business model.</li> <li>c. These areas not seen as traditional AONB areas of work, though Quantocks has long history and expertise in this type of work.</li> </ul> <p>Currently negotiating cost recovery for swaling and land management. Identified income generation potential on Cothelstone Hill but would need different operating model. There does not appear to be appetite to take this forward.</p>

<b>Action</b>	7. Political Mandate – Raise awareness among politicians (all levels) of functions, context, importance and benefits of AONB partnerships and joint working			
<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>£ implication</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Notes</b>
All	On-going, but needs to	Loss of LA funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation if not able to deliver.</li> </ul>	a. Political mandate at local level needs

	influence budget setting at LA level for Oct 2011	Loss of national government support.		<p>strengthening. Work with OWG to ensure facts / figures in most appropriate form are available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Build / expand on linkages to national government policy (localism, big society etc).</li> <li>c. Environment white paper – AONBs as delivery mechanism. Check English Biodiversity Strategy when it comes out.</li> <li>d. NPPF – Concern expressed from AONBs / other organisations. Does it pose a threat?</li> </ul> <p>National relationship still strong – ministerial foreword for Management Plans. Local level will require continued strong engagement. There will be a increased requirement through 2013/14 due to the revision of the Management Plan as need to ensure ownership by local authority partners.</p>
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#### Appendix 4: Quantock Hills AONB Service – detailed budget 2013 / 14

Core Expenditure	2012 13	2013 14	2014 15	Comments
Salaries	173,459	154,343	143,997	
Additional Hours		6,885	4,395	
National Insurance		9,298	8,222	
Superannuation		27,570	25,375	
Staff Training	2,400	1,800	2,000	
Electricity	200	100	100	Based on previous years figures
NNDR - Rates	900	900	900	Based on previous years figures
Rents	9,245	9,845	9,825	Increase in rent based on RPI increase clause
Water Charges	400	300	300	Based on previous years figures
Cleaning Charges		200	200	New charge
Insurance - premises		40	40	Based on previous years figures
Car allowance	4,300	4,400	4,300	
Hired vehicle costs	50	0	0	Now included in car allowance
Travel costs	500	700	500	Based on previous years figures
Vehicle costs - Fuel	3,340	3,340	3,340	Based on previous years figures
Vehicle costs - Tyres		300	300	
Vehicle costs - Licence		50	50	Sheet 3
Vehicle costs - Insurance	1,150	990	990	Based on quotes from SCC
Vehicle costs - Maintenance	1,820	400	400	Separated out vehicle maintenance and plant maintenance
Vehicle costs - Lease	7,786	7,786	7,786	Based on existing lease as new lease figures not available
Equipment	4,180	4,180	4,180	
Equipment R&M		920	920	New budget line to cover cost of maintenance for plant & equipment
Literature & Pubs	1,200	500	1,700	Reduction in printed and designed material.
Publicity & Promotion	700	1,120	820	To cover costs of shows and events for AONB Management Plan
Clothing & Uniform	200	200	200	
Research & Development	7,050	7,700	1,200	R&D costs associated with Management Plan or Planning
Reprographics - photocopy/printing	700	700	700	
Stationary	1,500	1,500	1,500	
Postage	300	300	300	
Phone rental/Mobile Phones	1,300	1,300	1,300	
Subsistence	100	100	100	
Cost of Meetings (External)	700	700	700	
Subscriptions	2,500	2,500	2,500	
Insurance	450	450	450	

Management Fee to SCC	3,000	8,250	8,250	Increase of £5,250 for Management Fee by SCC
<b>TOTAL CORE</b>	<b>229,430</b>	<b>259,666</b>	<b>237,840</b>	

<b>SDF Expenditure</b>				
F&H Pref/ Tech Services	22,000	21,995	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>21,995</b>	<b>0</b>	

<b>Project Expenditure</b>				
Contractor Costs	25,800	76,000	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,800</b>	<b>76,000</b>	<b>0</b>	

#### INCOME

Defra	176,249	165,621	160,224	
SCC	21,500	21,500	21,500	
TDBC	10,000	10,000	8,000	
SDC	11,500	11,500	11,500	
WSC	9,957	9,957	4,000	
SPS + ES	0	8,000	8,000	Cost recovery from Land Management Services
Mendip Hills AONB	11,000	11,000	11,000	recharge for volunteer coord post
FC Contribution	17,300	17,300	0	recharge for Ptn Ranger post
Events	1,000	1,000	1,000	
<b>Core Income</b>	<b>258,506</b>	<b>255,878</b>	<b>225,224</b>	

<b>Ext Project Income</b>				
Various	16,800	76,227	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,800</b>	<b>76,227</b>	<b>0</b>	

<b>RIA Brought Forward</b>	<b>74,745</b>	<b>72,821</b>	<b>47,265</b>	

**SUMMARY**

TOTAL INCOME	350,051	404,926	272,489	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	277,230	357,661	237,840	
<i>EARMARKED RESERVE</i>	<i>37,000</i>	<i>35,079</i>	<i>35,079</i>	To cover whole team redundancy
<b>Surplus / Deficit</b>	<b>35,821</b>	<b>12,186</b>	<b>-431</b>	

## RING FENCED BUDGETS

## AMENITY LAND

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2012 13</b>	<b>2013 14</b>	<b>2014 15</b>	
Travel Fares		300	300	
Equipment		1,200	1,200	
Fees & Hired		6,500	4,000	
Contractor Costs		5,500	4,000	
Management Fee to QHAONB		8,000	8,000	
		21,500	17,500	

<b>Income</b>	<b>2012 13</b>	<b>2013 14</b>	<b>2014 15</b>	
Defra - SPS		7,000	6,000	
NE - HLS Revenue Payment		5,085	5,085	
NE - HLS Capital works		5,211	3,350	
Recharge for Services (CL10)		2,500	2,500	
Quantock RIA 12/13		2,000	296	
		21,796	17,231	

## 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>