



**Quantock  
Hills  
National  
Landscape**

## **QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**2pm, Crowcombe Village Hall  
Crowcombe, Taunton, TA4 4AQ**

To: The members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Quantock Hills Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson on email [quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on page 2.

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

<b>Agenda:</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for absence.</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b> - Members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting (see Sc 5 page 2).
<b>3.</b>	<b>Accuracy of the previous minutes</b> (copy appended) <b>and to consider any matters arising.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Public question time</b> - The Chair will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting or present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Election of the JAC Chair.</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Paper A - Land Management &amp; Engagement</b> (Andy Stevenson / Owen Jones).
<b>7.</b>	<b>Paper B - Protected Landscape Targets &amp; Outcome Framework</b> (Iain Porter).
<b>10.</b>	<b>Paper C - Farming in Protected Landscapes</b> (Helen Richardson / Sally Pheasant).
<b>11.</b>	<b>Paper D - Partnership Update</b> (Iain Porter).
<b>12.</b>	<b>Paper E - Planning Report</b> (Alex Meletiou).
<b>13.</b>	<b>Paper F - National Landscape Finance Report</b> (Iain Porter).
<b>14.</b>	<b>AOB.</b>
	<p><b>Future JAC meeting dates</b> (all start at 2.00pm):</p> <p>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 - (West Quantoxhead Village Hall/St Audries).</p>
	<p><b>Note:</b></p> <p>Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills National Landscape Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ.</p> <p>Tel: 01823 451884 or Email: <a href="mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk">quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Meeting Guidance Notes:</b>	
1.	<p><b>Inspection of Papers</b></p> <p>Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact the Quantock Hills Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson at <a href="mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk">quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</a></p>
2.	<p><b>Notes of the Meeting</b></p> <p>Details of the issues discussed, and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from the Quantock Hills Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson at <a href="mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk">quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</a></p>
3.	<p><b>Public Question Time</b></p> <p>At the Chairperson's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about <b>any matter on the Committee's agenda</b>. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. <b>The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.</b></p> <p>A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Amanda Sampson, the committee administrator, <b>before the meeting</b>.</p> <p>You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairperson. You may not take direct part in the debate.</p> <p>The Chairperson will decide when public participation is to finish. If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairperson may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.</p> <p>An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.  <b>Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Substitutions</b></p> <p>Committee members can appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.</p>
5.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>It is a member of the JACs responsibility to declare a personal or prejudicial interest at all meetings where matters being discussed or to be discussed affect their interests. Full guidance can be found in appendix 3 of the JAC Constitution.</p>



**Quantock  
Hills  
National  
Landscape**

## **QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)**

Minutes of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held on:

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 at 2.00pm**

Spaxton Village Hall

### **Present:**

### **Members:**

Hugh Warmington (HW)	JAC Chair
Fran Smith (FS)	Somerset Council
Alan Bradford (AB)	Somerset Council
Tim Whittingham (TW)	Friends of the Quantocks
Debbie Salvidge (DS)	Quantock Commoners Association
Laura Daniells (LD)	Natural England
Laura Robertson (LR)	National Trust
Julian Taylor (JT)	Parish Representative - North Petherton Town Council
Sarah Nason (SN)	Parish Representative - Holford
Joshua Schweiso (JS)	Parish Representative - Spaxton

### **Officers:**

Iain Porter (IP)	Quantock Hills National Landscape
Amanda Sampson (AS)	Quantock Hills National Landscape
Bill Jenman (BJ)	Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme

### **Also present:**

Robin Stamp (Friends of the Quantocks) and Dixie Darch (member of the public).

## **1. Apologies**

Mike Caswell (Somerset Council), Bill Revans (Somerset Council), Tommy Muncie (National Trust), Mark Phillipson (West Quantoxhead PC), John Ebsary (Forestry England), Alicia Aras (Somerset Local Access Forum), Gwil Wren (Somerset Council), Lee Baker (Somerset Council) and David Stripp (Kingston St Mary PC).

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

HW declared himself as a Quantock Hills landowner, a member of CLA (Country Land & Business Association), Friends of the Quantocks, Falcon and Rural Housing, Somerset Local Access Forum and the Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group.

No other declarations were given.

## **3. Accuracy and matters arising from the previous minutes (23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024)**

The minutes of Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 were signed off as a true representation of the meeting.

## **4. Public Question Time**

No public questions.

## **5. Election of JAC Vice Chair**

FS nominated AB for the position of JAC Vice Chair, seconded by JT, all members voted in favour. HW welcomed AB to the position of JAC Vice Chair.

## **6. Presentation – Quantock hedgerows, issues & opportunities (Robin Stamp, Friends of the Quantocks Chair and Tim Whittingham, Friends of the Quantocks)**

Robin Stamp presented on the Elms and White Letter hairstreak butterfly project being delivered by Friends of the Quantocks, which has received funding from FiPL. Robin and Tim updated the partnership on the issues of hedgerow removal within the National Landscape and the lack of enforcement by the local authority and other enforcement bodies such as the RPA.

FS is happy for FotQ to forward any correspondence direct to her and she will forward to any relevant people within Somerset Council Planning Department. Thinks this is worth highlighting again and questions need to be asked.

DD commented in her previous role within Somerset Council that one of the issues are enforcement enhancement. Has the landowner been approached about this and would the community dissatisfaction be a stronger issue to the landowner than a fine.

IP suggested that FS contact Alex Meletiou, National Landscape Planning Officer, as he has been engaged with both the RPA and planning department as well as liaising with FotQ on this issue.

HW thanked Friends of the Quantocks for their presentation.

## **7. Paper A – 2025/26 Business Plan (Iain Porter)**

IP requested any comments or amendments on the draft Business Plan with any feedback to be sent by email to [iain.porter@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:iain.porter@somerset.gov.uk) by the 9 February 2025.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Paper C Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC noted the report.**

**8. Paper B – Quantock Landscape Partnership Extension (Bill Jenman)**

FS supports the extension and commented that the paper was put together very well.

HW commented on a very strong and persuasive paper. HW proposed the recommendation, all members in favour.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Paper D Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC noted the report.**
- 2) The JAC approved the extension of the QLPS.**

**9. Paper C – Partnership Update (Iain Porter)**

Lee Baker has been appointed as the new Somerset Council representative replacing Dixie Darch.

There were no comments or questions.

**Paper E Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC noted the report.**

**10. Paper D – Briefing paper on hunting activity on the Quantock Hills (Iain Porter)**

HW commented on an excellent paper. FS would like to see a breakdown or some description of the contact the Quantock Hills Team has with Natural England and other bodies about this issue. IP will ask the Rangers to give an update about this at a future meeting.

IP suggested the possibility of inviting Avon and Somerset Police to come along to a future JAC meeting to answer any questions on this. JT would a representative from the Quantock Staghounds be willing to come to a JAC meeting and discuss these issues. DS would both the Foxhounds and the Staghounds be invited to attend.

JT wanted it noted that the JAC partnership members in attendance supports the paper.

HW will pass on the concerns to both groups about this to raise awareness.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Paper F Recommendation(s):**

**1) The JAC Noted the report.**

**11. AOB**

No other business to note.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 30 April 2025 at 2.00pm (Crowcombe Village Hall).

**Meeting closed at 2.58pm.**

Quantock Hills National Landscape Management Plan Review Workshop (3pm – 4pm).

**Workshop closed at 4pm.**

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER A</b>
Subject	Land Management & Engagement	
Author	Andy Stevenson, Ranger & Owen Jones, Partnership Ranger	
Date	30/04/2025	

## 1) Habitat Management

- a. A wet and windy first half of the winter with a number of named storms creating a large amount of damage and obstructions particularly at Cothelstone Hill. Following this we've had a very dry and warm spell which has meant the hills have been at risk of wildfires and swaling has had to be done extremely carefully.
- b. Cothelstone Hill – As members will be aware the National Landscape Team undertake the day to day management of Cothelstone Hill. The site is owned by Somerset Council and on a long-term lease to the South West Heritage Trust. The key work streams over the winter have included –
  - i. At the two new purpose built adder hibernacula structures a monitoring program has been set up with volunteers to assess use by reptiles and mammals. The monitoring follows a similar scheme which was created by the Mendip Hill National Landscape team.
  - ii. The coppicing of the woodland continued with six volunteer groups taking part. We are now over halfway through the cycle of returning the woodland into its regular cycle, which is initially set at 10-years though depending upon regrowth will be 7-15 years in the future. Areas in the coppiced coupes that are bare have been infilled with hazel whips to create a fuller canopy.
  - iii. Ongoing monitoring of the ash trees across the site has led to further trees showing dieback near to paths and access points being felled and left on the ground as deadwood habitat. Some more sizeable trees have been felled by tree surgeons that posed significant danger near to the car park and bridleway. A number of veteran trees have had smaller trees around them thinned out, a process called halo thinning, to prevent damage in the future and allow space for them to continue to grow.
- c. Swaling – this has been a successful season with 9 burns completed which is more than in the previous few years. In addition at two locations on Quantock Common we have carried out trial plots with permission from Natural England where we have done a swale area, a cut and collect area and a cut and leave area. This will allow NE to monitor the rate of regrowth and the variety of vegetation species.
- d. Hedgelaying – working with the Somerset Hedge Group two training days were successfully held at Perry Farm, West Quantoxhead and New Stowey Farm, Nether Stowey. Over 20 people attended the two days, and many were encouraged to enter the competition. The annual competition, which had been postponed from November due to one of the named storms, was held at Cothelstone Estate in March. 35 people took part in the Novice individual, Novice pairs and Open individual classes. According to the judges the standard of hedgelaying was better than ever.



- e. Fire risk – the Rangers have monitored the Fire Risk throughout the spring dry period and installed the large fire signs at key access points. We have worked with the Commoners to ensure the fire breaks were cut again this winter. Andy, Ranger, has attended wildfire and management training, a Lantra accredited course. This has been developed with Natural England and the national Fire & Rescue Service Wildfires Response team.
- f. Hayman's Pond – Last autumn the historic mill pond in Holford Combe was restored with funding from QLPS. The Rangers supervised contractors to dig out the old pond and rebuild the retaining walls and overspill slipway. Volunteers helped to clean off stonework from the old walls that could be used for rebuilding. Tree surgeons have cleared a substantial alder stool that was blocking the slipway before more volunteers helped to redirect some of the stream to fill the pond again.

## 2) Volunteers & Engagement

- a. Volunteer Rangers – the volunteer rangers have carried out numerous patrols individually and in larger groups to tackle bigger jobs such as litter picks. They continue to be our eyes and ears across the hills and to engage with the public. Recently they have done some practical tasks including hedgelaying, helping at a mushroom wood and doing dry stone walling on the Mendip Hills with the National Trust as a return exchange.
- b. Working Well group – numbers in this group are slowly picking up with people being referred to us through different organisations such as homeless providers and Occupational Health. Tasks have included gorse cutting and burning, working in a mushroom wood and hedgelaying.
- c. QCV – this volunteer group provides a band of skilled individuals that achieve a lot of work each time. Tasks since the autumn have included hedgelaying along a bridleway into Holford Combe, cutting and burning gorse and coppicing along a lane at Bincombe.
- d. Estates Team – these individuals help most weeks to assist the Rangers with practical work that is more specialised and have been active on our alpine tractor cutting back scrub at Cothelstone Hill and installing the National Landscape rebranded signs and interpretation panels. The annual audit of the Quantock Greenway walking and riding routes has been completed and any faults rectified.
- e. Green Days – after a long gap we have managed to work with a group from this day centre again. They are always enthusiastic and help with a variety of tasks.
- f. Historic Monument Surveyors – With support from Dan Broadbent, Historic Heritage Officer with the QLPS, the Scheduled Monument Surveys are being restarted. This monitoring scheme was introduced by Historic England in 2013 and managed by the QHNL Team but due to declining support from Historic England the scheme required a new cohort of volunteers. Existing and new volunteers will undertake training in June and Historic England have committed

to the scheme ensuring the Scheduled Monuments continued to be monitored and protected into the future.

- g. Wildlife Surveyors – The team continue to lead and support a number of wildlife monitoring schemes including butterflies, hedgerows (QLPS), bats, dormice, nightjars, pied flycatchers with significant volunteer engagement. For some of these scheme's recruitment has recently been undertaken to increase volunteer numbers.

### 3) **Visitor Management**

- a. Fly tipping / litter – 4 big deposits of flytipping were reported including a spate of car tyres in large numbers. Car parks need litter picking constantly.
- b. Patrols – the Rangers maintained a regular routine of patrols during the week and at weekends/bank holidays focussing on the key messages at the time of year. Sheep worrying by dogs and people trying to feed/stroke the ponies tend to be the ongoing issues.
- c. Access Projects - Using funds from Defra's Capital Access Grant and QLPS access improvements have been made across Cothelstone Hill. An extension of the gravel access path has been created to provide an all-ability route through to a new set of benches at a viewpoint looking east. In addition many of the paths through the woodland and the Rap have been regraded to provide better drainage and improve the path surface.

### 4) **Monitoring and surveys**

- a. Pied flycatchers – the boxes have been checked for the first time this season and there are signs that blue tits have already started nesting and producing eggs. Male Pied Flycatchers have returned to the Combes.
- b. Dormouse surveys – the boxes at Cothelstone Hill continue to be checked monthly with some additional dormouse tubes being installed too.
- c. Summer Heathland Breeding Bird survey – In 2024 the Team commissioned Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy to undertake a Summer Heathland Breeding Bird Survey. These occur every six years and survey the heath and extensive acidic grassland habitats within the National Landscape. The first survey was undertaken in 1992 meaning there is significant trend data now available and surveys for sixteen key bird species associated with heathlands. The survey found that six species including redstarts, whinchats and yellowhammers had declined, following national trends but that some species populations have increased, most notably Dartford warblers. Copies of the report can be found here - [Summer heathland breeding bird survey 2024 | Quantock Hills](#)
- d. Butterfly surveys – the transects at Cothelstone Hill and Fyne Court have started again. Many of the volunteers involved in the surveys have helped to plant hybrid

elm species in hedgerows where English elm trees are dying off due to Dutch Elm disease (Friends of the Quantocks held a training day and have co-ordinated the planting of the elm trees with support from volunteers and funding from FiPL). This will encourage white letter hairstreak butterflies to colonise as they feed off the flowering trees.

- e. Deer Count – on Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup> the annual deer count was held across the Hills. Over 60 people got up early to survey their allocated areas. It was for the second year in a row bright sunshine with little wind making it ideal conditions. Unfortunately, there was a small rave being held in Ramscombe which meant that many of the deer had been displaced out of Great Wood. [Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group](#)
- f. Bat Monitoring – The report for the 2024 season is now available - [Bat monitoring report 2024 | Quantock Hills](#) – and planning for the 2025 surveys is underway with training events due in June.

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC notes the report.**

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER</b> <b>B</b>
Subject	Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcome Framework	
Author(s)	Iain Porter, Manager	
Date	30/04/2025	

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## 1. Introduction

Published by Government in January 2024, the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) establishes ambitious targets for National Parks and National Landscapes. It recognises the crucial role these nationally important landscapes play in achieving positive changes for nature, climate, people and place.

The PLTOF builds on new legislation in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) that strengthens how relevant authorities must further the purposes of Protected Landscapes. The targets are for the 'place' and will be delivered by a range of partners through National Park / National Landscape statutory management plans.

The targets set the ambition for how Protected Landscapes will achieve the following three outcomes from Defra's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP):



Thriving plants and wildlife



Mitigating and adapting to climate change



Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

## Ten targets prioritised for Protected Landscapes (as areas)

Defra has selected ten targets for Protected Landscapes and partners to prioritise and focus on delivery. These prioritised EIP targets are those which are most relevant to National Park and National Landscapes' statutory purposes, with data potentially available at the right spatial level, and which Protected Landscape bodies have the ability to influence through mobilising partners.

The 10 targets create a shared national level of ambition for all 44 of England's Protected Landscapes. The targets are for the Protected Landscapes as places (the geographic area covered by the designation), with all stakeholders, partners and land managers in the area sharing responsibility for their delivery. The Framework will support strategic planning across Protected Landscapes and complement the ambitious work already being undertaken through nature recovery plans and other initiatives.

Seven of the targets have metrics to be achieved equally across all Protected Landscapes, while the remaining three set national targets, allowing individual Protected Landscape Partnership / authorities to apportion a locally decided target. This allows Partnerships to assess the most appropriate target for the local circumstances of their Protected Landscape blending ambition with local opportunity.

*Baseline figures provided by Defra in September 2024. Some figures require further evidence while others are waiting for agreed metrics from Defra (Target 9).*

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**Target 1 – Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline)**

**Baseline Figure** – 3,364.15Ha (34% of the QHNL). Figure 1.

**Apportionment** – Pro-rata'd figure = 781.16Ha (39.06Ha / yr)

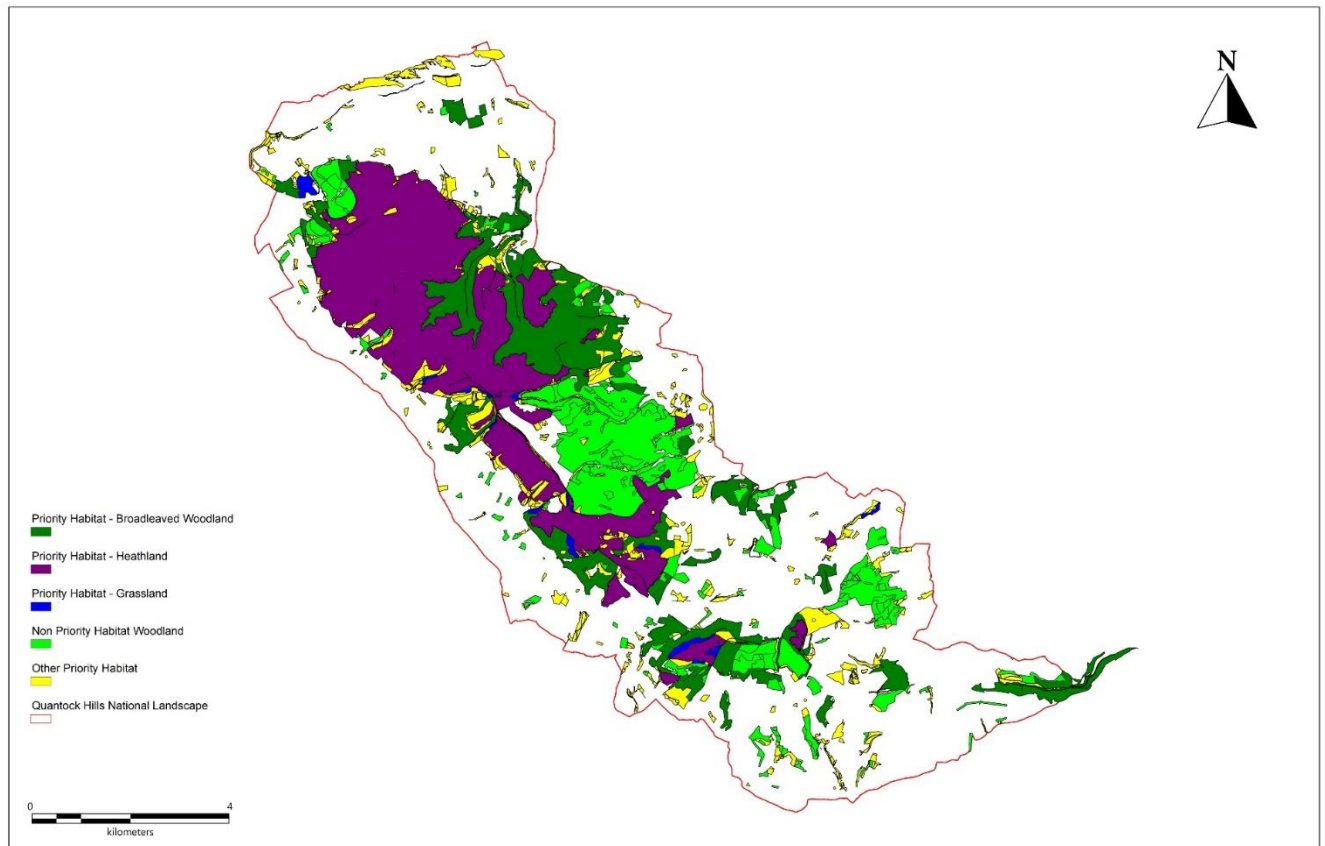
**Notes** - Consider the extent of PHI (3,364Ha) and non-PHI woodland (1,151Ha) total = 4,515Ha (46% of NL). The Partnership needs to take into consideration the high proportion of the National Landscape that is already deemed to be wildlife-rich and the constraint this may place on creation of new wildlife-rich habitat.

Potential wildlife-rich habitat – Use of Econet data identifies 3,048Ha of potential network and stepping stones for three main priority habitats (heathland, woodland & grassland) BUT these often occupy same land and cut across other priority habitat (figures 2,3 & 4). By combining the opportunity areas (potential networks and stepping stones) for the main priority habitats and cutting out intersections with other priority habitat or non-priority habitat woodland the area of potential wildlife rich land reduces to 1,328Ha (Figure 5).

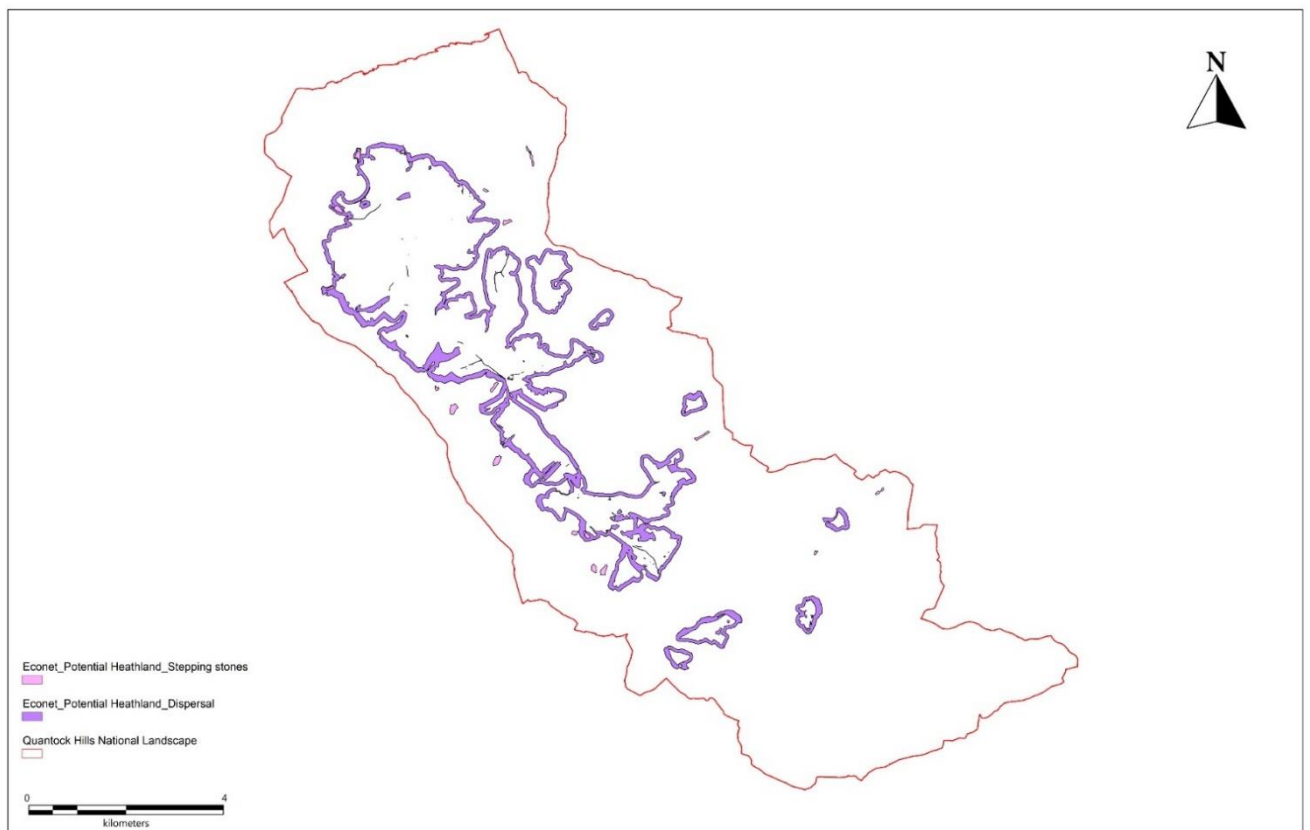
With the challenge from Government to be ambitious the Partnership could set a target of 1,328Ha based on evidence as provided by Econet. While this would exceed the pro-rata'd figure by 70% it would link with the ambitions of the Nature Recovery Plan, especially the restoration or creation of species rich grasslands.

<p><b>Recommendation</b> - Set an ambitious target, guided by evidence provided by EcoNet, of <b>1,328Ha</b>. Together with existing wildlife-rich habitat this would create 5,843Ha (59%) over the Quantock Hills National Landscape.</p>
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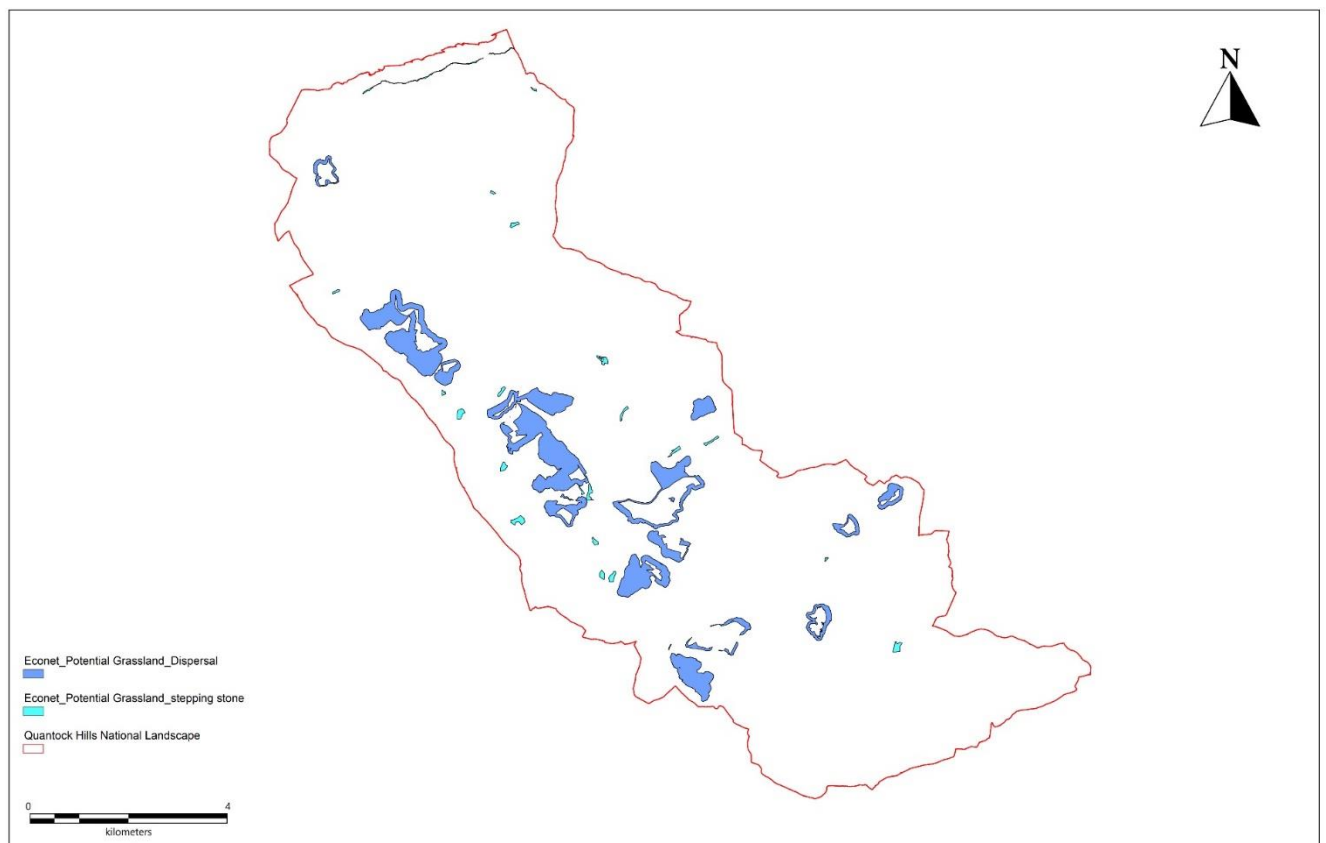
**Figure 1:** Existing Priority Habitat and non-priority woodland in Quantock Hills National Landscape (NE Priority Habitat Inventory 2022).



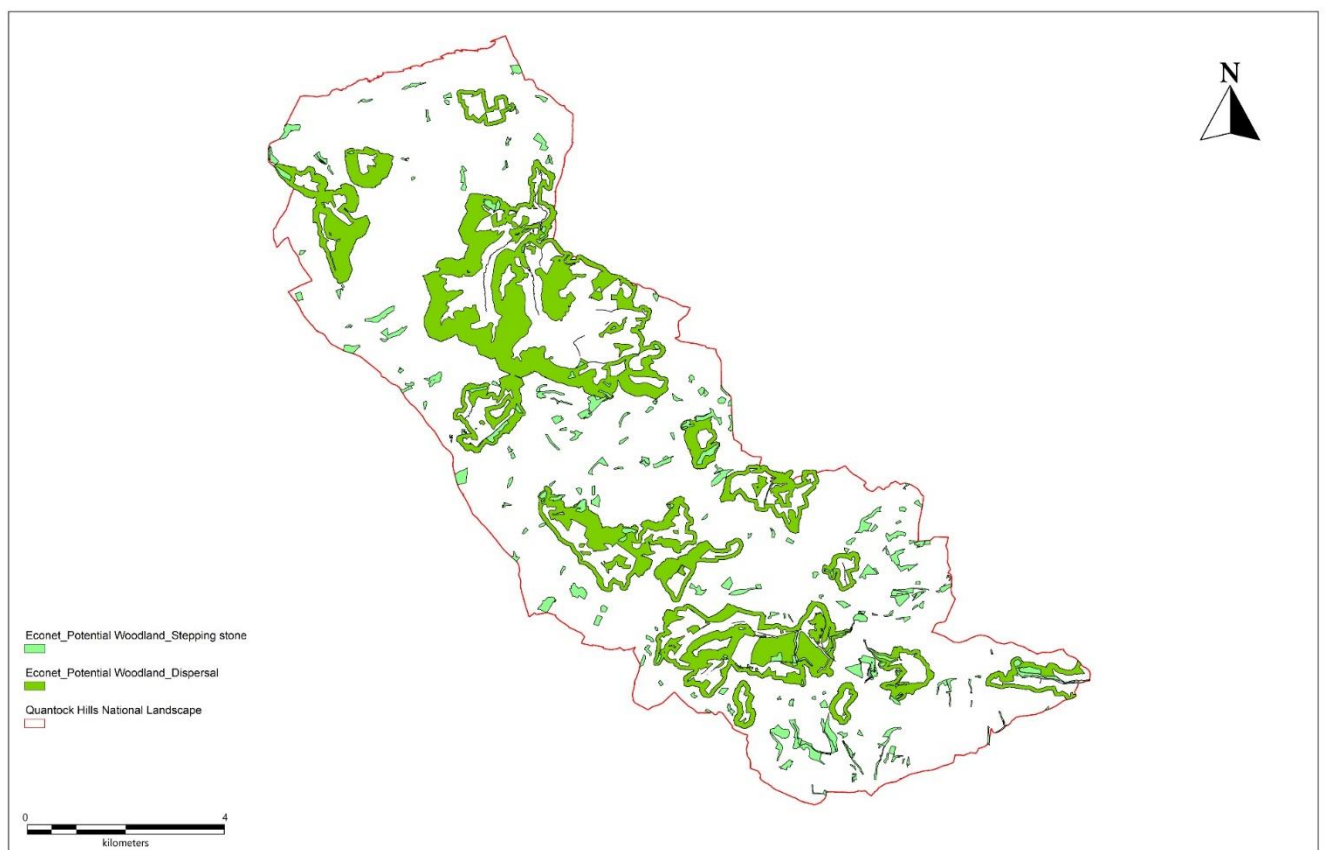
**Figure 2:** Potential areas of heathland habitat creation (Econet)



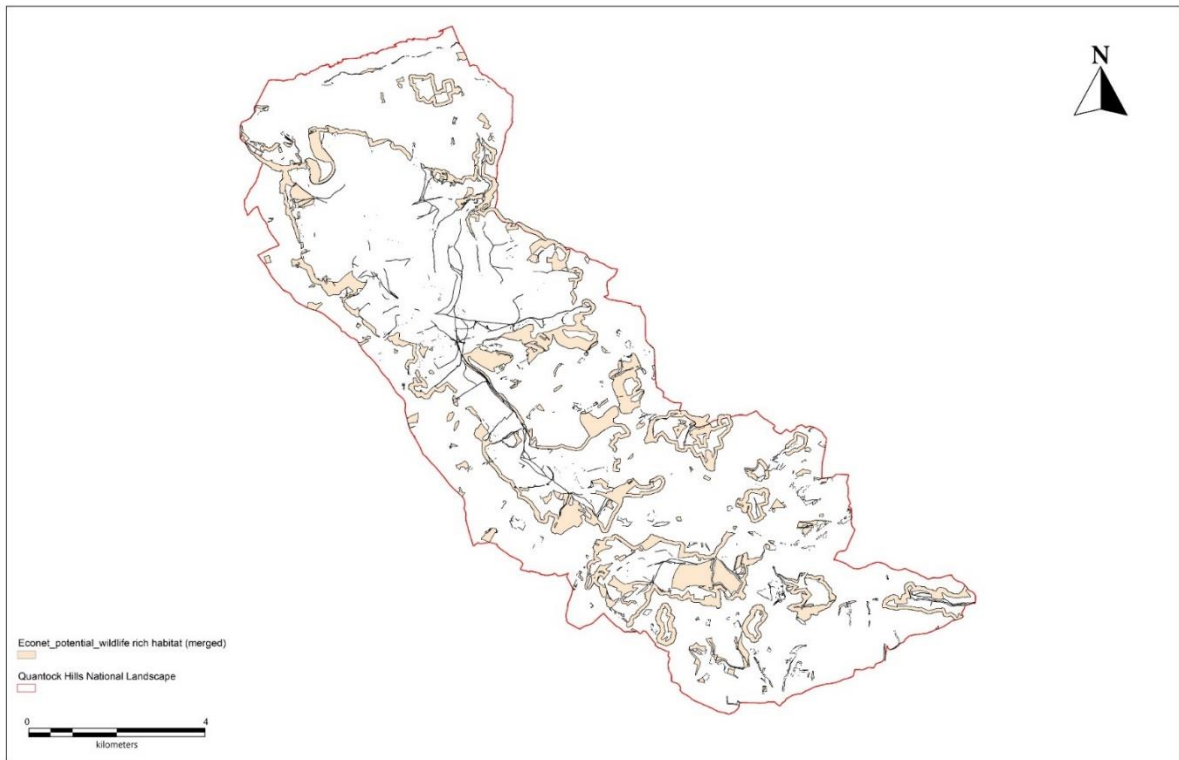
**Figure 3:** Potential areas of species rich-grassland habitat creation (Econet).



**Figure 4:** Potential areas of woodland habitat creation (Econet).



**Figure 5:** Potential areas of wildlife-rich habitat creation (merged areas)





**Target 2 - Bring 80% of Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.**

**Baseline Figure** - Total no of SSSI features = 14. No. in favourable condition = 6 (42.9%).

**Target** – Number required to be in favourable condition = 12

**Notes** – There are three SSSI's within the Quantock Hills National Landscapes, the largest is the Quantocks SSSI, with Ge-Mare Farm fields and Blue Anchor to Lilstock Coast (Geological SSSI). In summary the features are listed as:

The Quantocks SSSI:

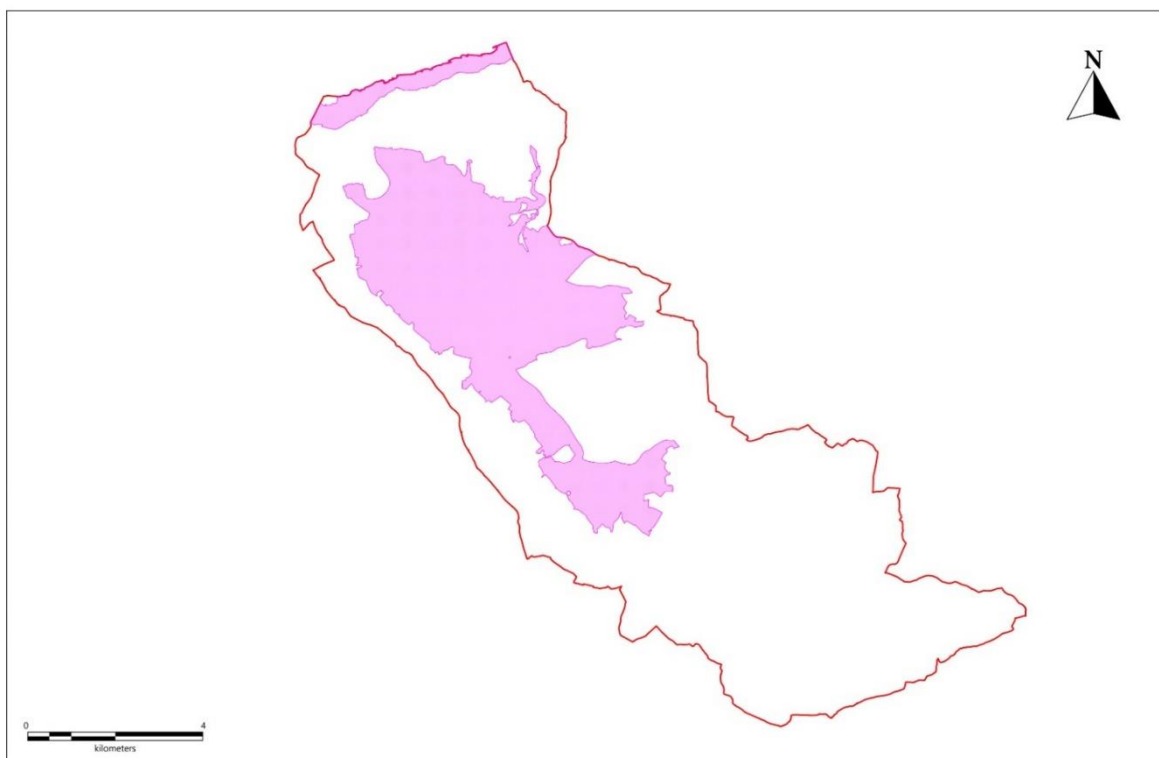
- Assemblages of breeding birds – Woodland.
- Lowland dry acid grassland (U4).
- Lowland dry acid grassland (U4/20).
- Lowland dry heath.
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland.
- Short sedge acidic fen (upland).
- Upland oakwood.
- Wet woodland.

Plus the SAC features which incorporate some of the SSSI woodland:

- H91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the UK.
- H91E0 Alluvial woods with A. glutinosa, F. excelsior.

*Further information on features and status to be supplied by Natural England.*

**Figure 6:** Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the Quantock Hills National Landscape.



**Target 3 - 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.**

**Baseline Figure** - NE identified 22 actions required. 15 (68%) of these actions is 'underway – on track'.

**Target** – Number of 'action on track' required = 14.

**Notes** – Baseline data has been presented by Natural England that shows the number of features with actions on track to achieve favourable condition. Of the 14 features of the SSSI within the Quantock Hills National Landscape 0 (0%) are deemed positive, all are assessed as being negative. "Negative" refers to actions which have not been yet undertaken, or which are resulting in a negative impact on the SSSI.

*Further information to be supplied by Natural England.*

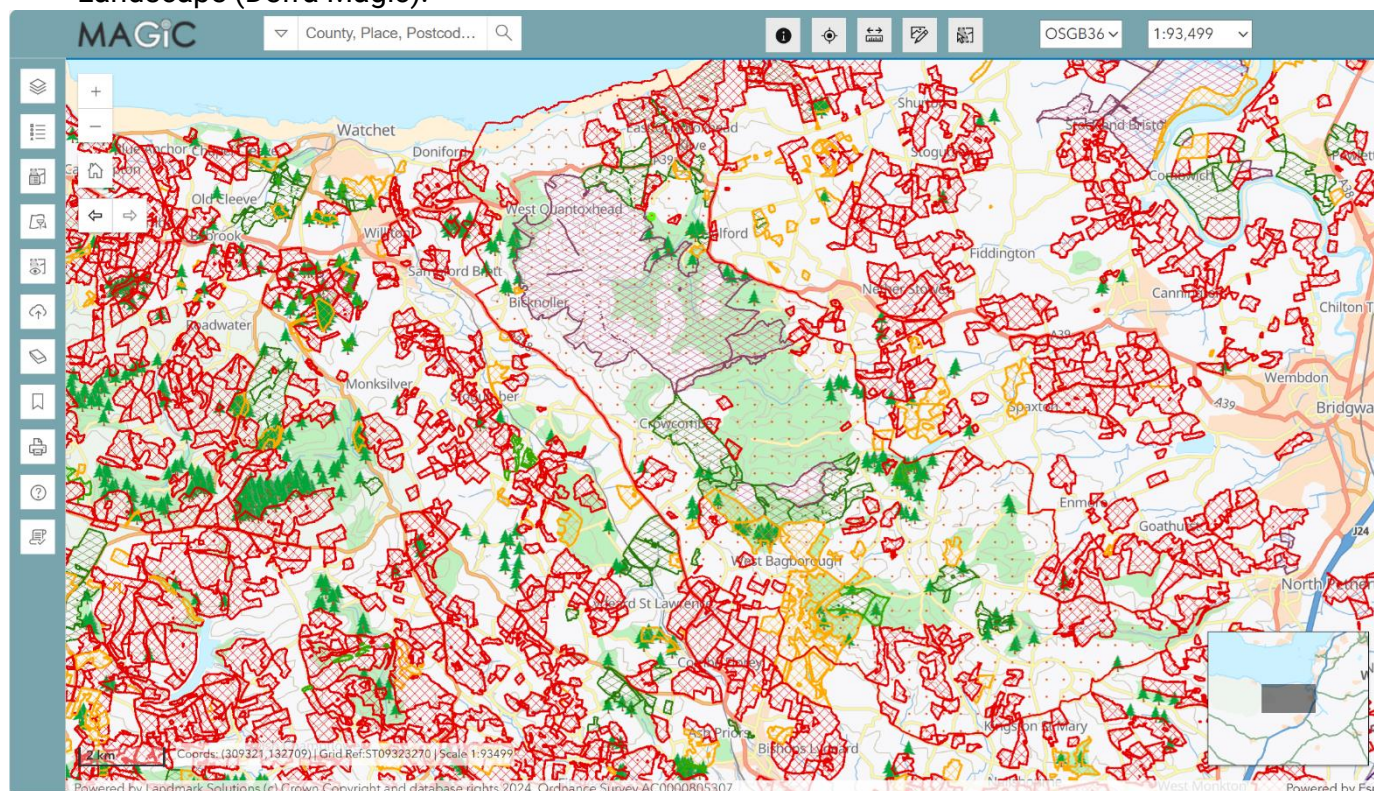
**Target 4 - Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.**

**Baseline Figure** – Area in Agri-Environment Schemes = 3,400Ha (34%).

**Target** – Area in Agri-Environment Schemes = 5,843Ha.

**Notes** – Baseline figure includes SSSI within Agri-Environment Schemes, to ensure consistency target includes SSSIs and aligns with target 1.

**Figure 7: Areas under Agri-Environment schemes (2023) within the Quantock Hills National Landscape (Defra Magic).**



**Target 5 - Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.**

**Baseline Figure** – No baseline currently provided.

**Target** - Difficult to set a target with two variables. Recommend approach to select higher percentage of land managers (80%) with lower percentage of land (10%).

Rationale for higher percentage for engagement with land managers / farmers is that these stakeholders are key to achieving success across multiple National Landscape objectives including nature recovery, climate and socio-economic outcomes. The Quantock Hills National Landscape Team and Partnership has a good level of engagement currently however successful engagement with 80% of farmers / land managers is ambitious, though with programmes such as FiPL, should be achievable. The rationale for the lower level of land in nature friendly farming (10%), is that we know for some of the more intensive farming systems this could be achievable, allowing more farmers to engage successfully in this target.

**Recommendation** – Ensure at least 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% of their land by 2030

**Target 6 - Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by at least 2050 relative to 1990 levels.**

**Baseline Figure** - 10.8 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e (see appendix 1 for data).

**Target** – We currently do not have data for GHG emissions for the National Landscape at 1990 levels therefore setting of the target is difficult. However the Partnership should be looking at actions that will reduce GHG emissions and where the areas of greatest reduction could be. As with many other rural areas the significant contributors to GHG emissions are domestic, transport and livestock. Land use such as forestry and grasslands provide sequestration reducing the total GHG emissions for the National Landscape.

Opportunities to reduce GHG, that are within the remit of the Partnership include agriculture, especially livestock, and improving soil sequestration, which is impacted by arable farming systems. Linking with targets 1, 7 and 8 will lead to a reduction in GHG emissions due to the increased sequestration these land uses provide,. The Partnership can look to influence other responsible authorities in supporting the reduction of GHG emissions, especially with regard to transport and domestic.

**Target 7 - Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.**

**Baseline Figure** – 14.87Ha.

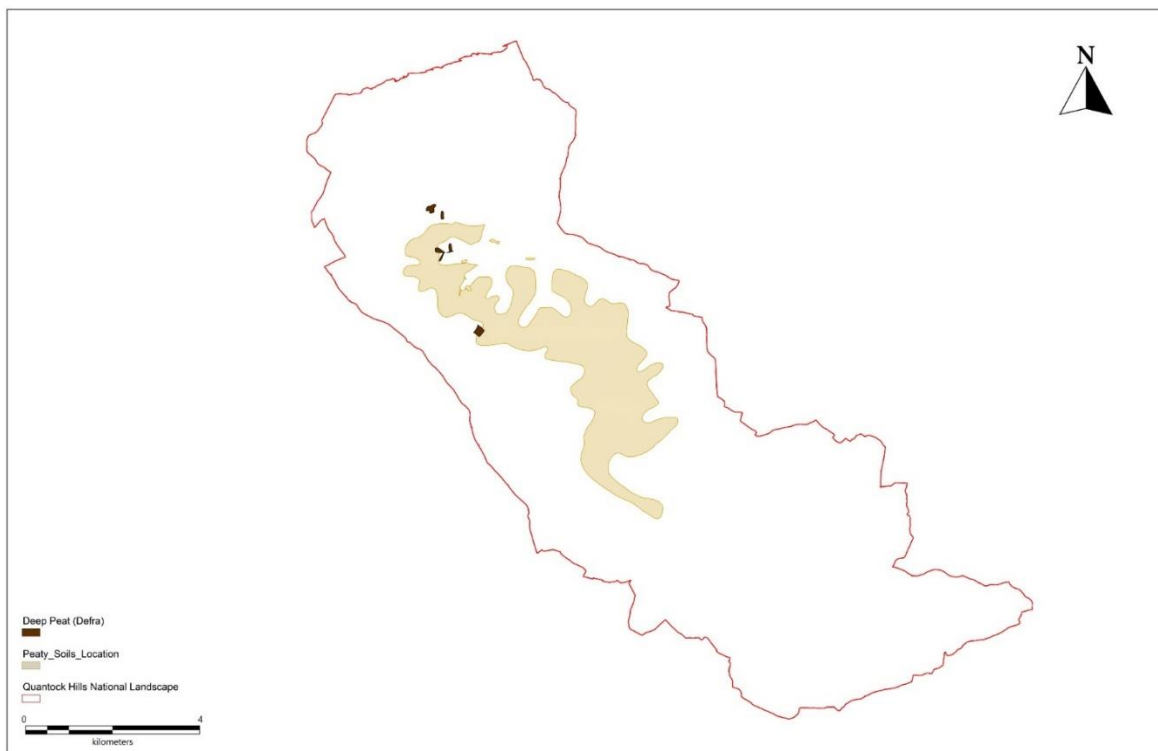
**Apportionment** – Pro-rata'd figure = 6.23Ha (0.22Ha / yr).

**Notes** – The current extent of deep peat soils on Quantock Hills is assessed as being in good condition. There is little opportunity to enhance these areas and opportunities to create deep peat is constrained due to geology and shallow soils over much of the Quantock Hills.

*Initial comments from Dr Laura Daniells (Natural England)– there is some scope for re-wetting areas around mires and to block ditches/channels higher on the hill as well as lower down to hold back water, this could result in conditions conducive to peat formation. There are pockets of peat on the hill, and this would serve to improve habitats as well as forming peat and reducing wildfire risk while affecting downstream flooding.*

**Recommendation** - Have a zero target for expansion of peat area with target that current extent of 14.87Ha is in good condition, or restored where degraded, by 2050.

**Figure 8:** Area of peaty soils and 'deep' peat within the Quantock Hills National Landscape



**Target 8 – Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).**

**Baseline Figure** – 3,133.98Ha (31.69% of National Landscape).

**Apportionment** – Pro-rata'd figure = 296.71Ha (10.60Ha / yr).

**Notes** – The current extent of woodland cover for the Quantock Hills National Landscape is 3,133 (31.69%), made up of 2,673.26Ha woodland and 460.72Ha tree cover outside of woodland.

Due to the extent of existing woodland (3,133.98Ha) (Figure 9) and other priority habitats (1,950.23Ha) along with higher agricultural land classification (grade 1 & 2) there is limited opportunities for large scale woodland creation. The Forestry Commissions Woodland Creation Sensitivity mapping (v4) identifies that 71% of the National Landscape (Figure 10) is either unsuitable for woodland creation or has a high sensitivity meaning it would not usually be considered. Only 29% is medium sensitivity and there is no low sensitivity areas.

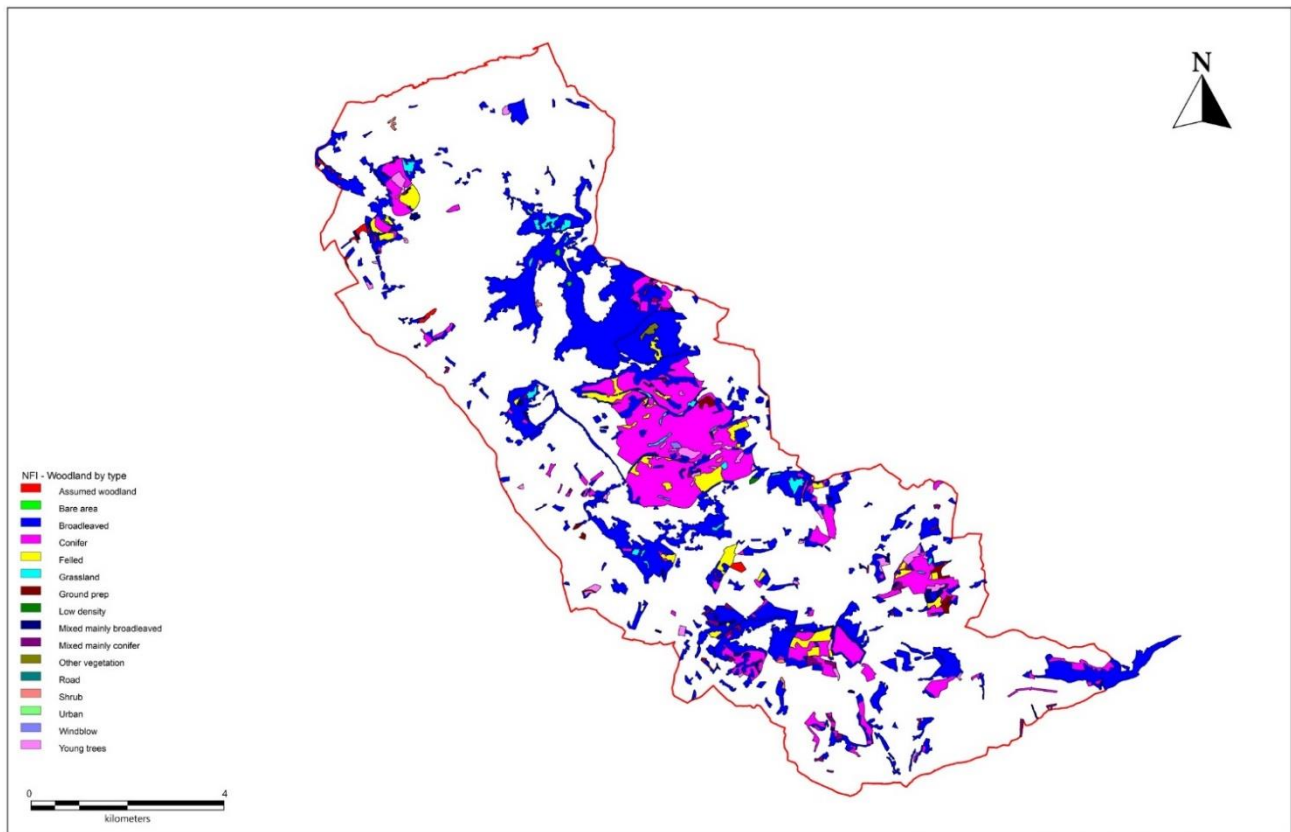
There is however opportunity to work towards higher numbers of smaller plantings, such as field corners and increasing the number of trees in hedgerows. Using the Econet data we can use the stepping stone modelling to identify potential areas that would provide greatest connectivity achievable within the land use and landscape (Figure 11). This identifies 382Ha of potential woodland creation, such as small farm woodlands, field corners, enhancing hedgerows to create wooded corridors etc and by cross referencing with the Woodland Creation Sensitivity mapping we can estimate 186Ha potential increase in tree cover.

*Initial comments from Dr Laura Daniells (Natural England) - I would need to look more closely at the criteria, but I would support the creation of corridors of narrow woodland to link up the wider landscape.*

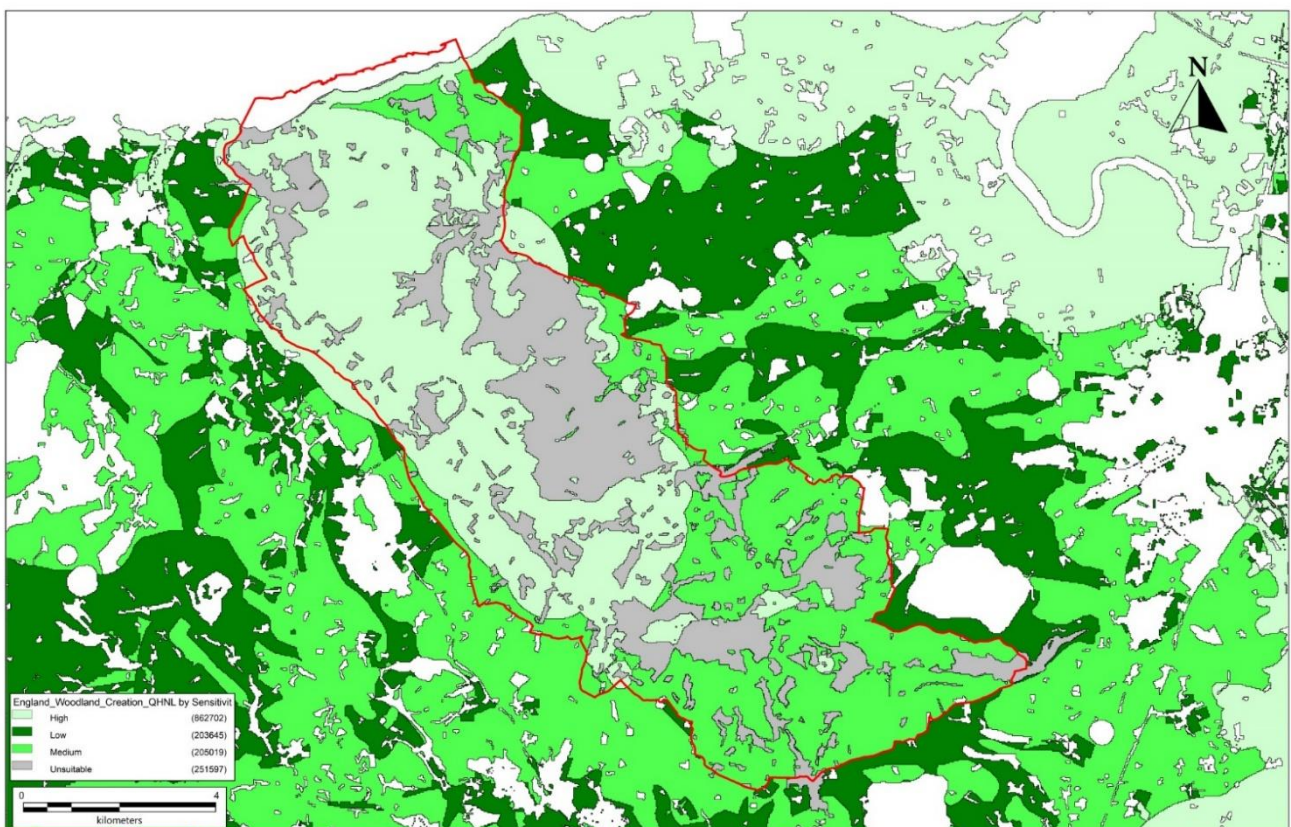
<p><b>Recommendation</b> – Using Econet stepping stone data for woodlands aim to create <b>186Ha</b> of new tree cover (woodland and outside woodland) within the Quantock Hills National Landscape</p>
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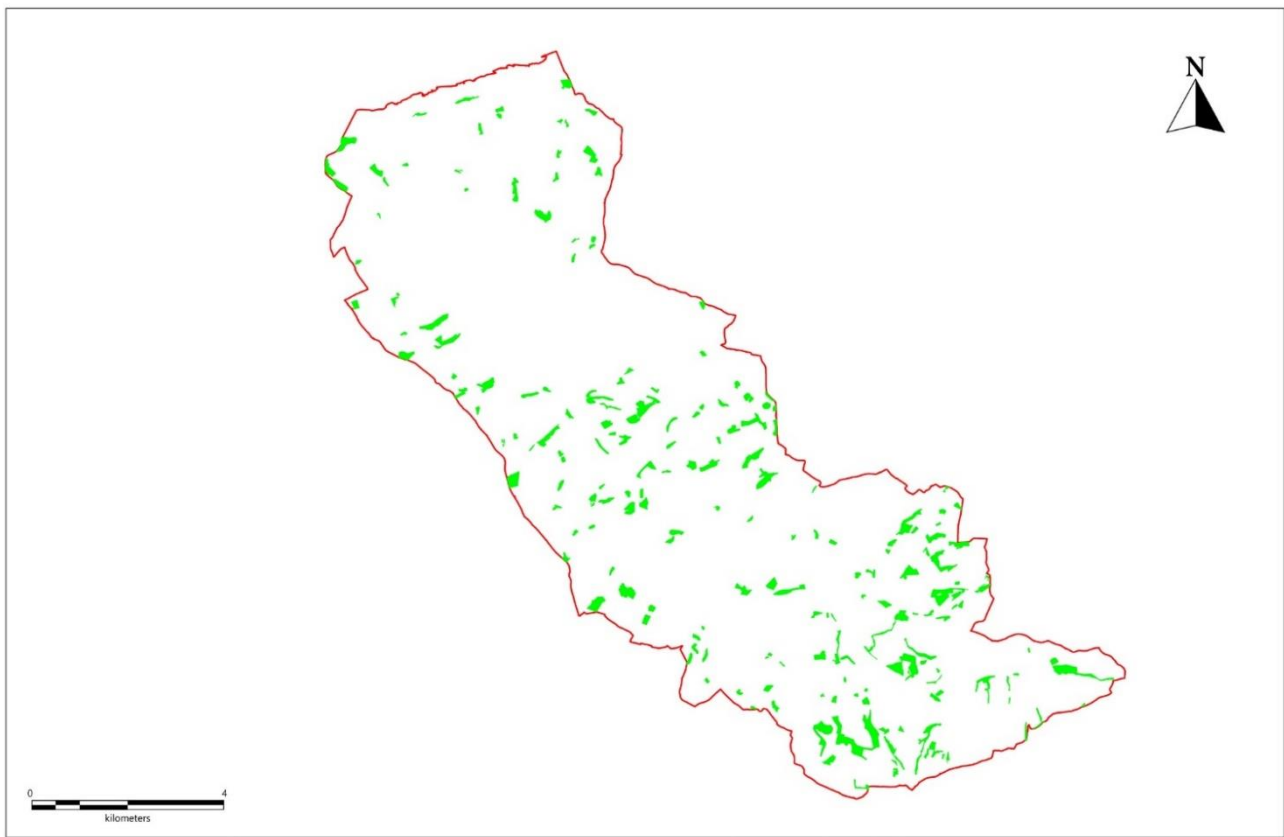
**Figure 9** – Current woodland extent with the Quantock Hills National Landscape (Note this does not include the trees outside woodland).



**Figure 10** - Forestry Commission Woodland Creation sensitivity mapping, Quantock Hills National Landscape



**Figure 11** – Woodland & tree cover opportunities based on Econet woodland ‘stepping stones’ data.



**Target 9 - Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using metrics based on those in our Access for All programme.**

**Baseline Figure** – No baseline set as metrics not confirmed.

**Notes** – The Partnership has undertaken numerous projects and initiatives that have increased the accessibility of the Quantock Hills. This includes physical improvements to the infrastructure and information to allow people confidence in exploring the National Landscape. The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme has undertaken significant work in introducing the Quantock Hills to groups that have historically not accessed the Protected Landscape. This work will continue, albeit in a different format, and once the metrics have been agreed the Partnership will be reporting on these, as we currently do for the Access for All programme.

**Recommendation** – await metrics from Defra.

**Target 10 - Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.**

**Baseline Figure** – Total number of heritage assets = 259. Number of heritage assets on Heritage at Risk Register (2022) = 8

**Notes** – Number of heritage assets, Listed buildings = Grade I (8) / Grade II\* (27) / Grade II (170). Scheduled Monuments = 51. Registered Parks and Gardens = 3. Heritage at Risk - Listed buildings (Grade I) = 1, Scheduled Monuments = 6, Registered Parks & Gardens (Grade II) = 1. The Partnership has worked with Historic England and South West Heritage Trust to undertake monitoring of historic assets and where appropriate to undertake conservation and enhancement works. Most recently work was undertaken on Dowsborough Hill Fort, Barrows on Black Hill, Cairns on Wills Neck and Lydeard Hill and FiPL funded conservation, and enhancement works on a listed building at Cothelstone, meaning that these should soon be removed from the Heritage at Risk register.

<p><b>Recommendations</b> – Target that there are no heritage assets (Listed Buildings, Registered Parks &amp; Gardens, Scheduled Monuments) on the national Heritage at Risk Register by 2050.</p>
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**Recommendation(s):**

1) The JAC notes the report.

2) The JAC agrees the targets as recommended in the report for inclusion in the reviewed Quantock Hills National Landscape Management Plan.



## **Appendix B1: Protected Landscapes greenhouse gas emissions.**

Data has been provided by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. It combines data from the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory with data from a number of other sources, including local energy consumption statistics, to produce a nationally consistent set of greenhouse emissions estimates for Protected Landscapes. Protected Landscapes consist of the UK's National Parks and National Landscapes. Estimates of emissions within National Landscapes have been calculated for the period 2005 – 2022 for the first time, supplementing data supplied to the National Parks.

The estimates show "territorial" emissions, meaning emissions that occur within the UK's borders. Emissions are reported against the areas where they occurred except for energy supply emissions that are distributed to sectors and locations based on where the "end-use" of the energy occurred and emissions from waste that have been distributed based on the waste arising in each area.

Except for the energy industry, emissions from the production of goods are assigned to where the production takes place. Therefore, emissions from the production of goods which are exported will be included, and emissions from the production of goods which are imported are excluded.

The greenhouse gases covered by these statistics are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. In accordance with international reporting and carbon trading protocols, each of these gases is weighted by its global warming potential (GWP), so that total greenhouse gas emissions can be reported on a consistent basis (in carbon dioxide equivalent units). The GWP for each gas is defined as its warming influence relative to that of carbon dioxide. The GWPs used in these statistics are from table 8.A.1 (without climate-carbon feedback) of Working Group 1 of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2013.

The UK territorial emission statistics published by the DESNZ also cover emissions from hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride and nitrogen trifluoride (collectively referred to as fluorinated gases or F gases), but are not able to be estimated at a national park and national landscape level at this time. Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide collectively accounted for an estimated 98% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK in 2022, with F gases making up the remaining 2%.

The figures in the following tables are reported in kilotons of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e).

Table B1: Summary of GHG Emissions by sector.

Calendar Year	Industry Total	Commercial Total	Public Sector Total	Domestic Total	Transport Total	Land Use Net Emissions	Agriculture Total	Waste Total	Grand Total	Per Capita Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Emissions per km <sup>2</sup> (kt CO <sub>2</sub> e)
2005	0.3	1.7	0.3	9.0	9.5	-17.5	17.7	1.3	22.3	9.6	0.2
2006	0.3	1.8	0.3	9.3	9.6	-17.9	18.3	1.3	22.9	9.8	0.2
2007	0.3	1.7	0.3	8.9	9.9	-18.1	17.3	1.4	21.7	9.3	0.2
2008	0.3	1.7	0.3	8.8	9.6	-18.7	18.6	1.1	21.7	9.2	0.2
2009	0.2	1.5	0.2	8.3	9.3	-19.0	18.0	1.2	19.7	8.3	0.2
2010	0.3	1.5	0.2	8.9	9.3	-19.0	18.0	1.5	20.7	8.6	0.2
2011	0.2	1.4	0.2	7.7	9.0	-19.3	16.9	1.5	17.7	7.3	0.2
2012	0.2	1.5	0.2	8.1	9.0	-18.5	17.4	1.4	19.4	7.9	0.2
2013	0.2	1.4	0.2	7.8	9.2	-19.3	17.3	1.4	18.2	7.4	0.2
2014	0.2	1.2	0.2	6.7	9.6	-19.2	17.2	1.4	17.3	7.0	0.2
2015	0.2	1.1	0.2	6.2	10.1	-19.4	17.6	1.6	17.6	7.1	0.2
2016	0.2	0.9	0.1	5.7	10.7	-18.7	17.9	1.7	18.5	7.4	0.2
2017	0.2	0.9	0.2	5.2	10.9	-19.5	18.2	1.8	18.0	7.1	0.2
2018	0.2	0.8	0.1	5.1	10.5	-19.4	17.5	1.8	16.6	6.5	0.2
2019	0.2	0.8	0.1	4.9	10.5	-19.6	17.5	1.8	16.3	6.4	0.2
2020	0.2	0.6	0.1	4.7	8.7	-20.0	17.0	1.7	13.0	5.1	0.1
2021	0.2	0.7	0.1	4.8	9.8	-19.4	17.4	1.0	14.6	5.7	0.1
2022	0.2	0.8	0.1	4.3	9.6	-19.2	14.8	0.2	10.8	4.1	0.1

Table B2: Land Use GHG Emissions.

Calendar Year	Net Emissions: Bioenergy crops	Net Emissions: Cropland mineral soils under LUC	Net Emissions: Forestry	Net Emissions: Grassland mineral soils under LUC	Net Emissions: Other LULUCF	Net Emissions: Peatland	Net Emissions: Settlements	LULUCF Net Emissions
2005	-	1.9	-17.4	-2.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-17.5</b>
2006	-	1.9	-17.9	-2.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-17.9</b>
2007	-	1.8	-17.9	-2.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-18.1</b>
2008	-0.1	1.8	-18.3	-2.7	0.3	0.1	0.2	<b>-18.7</b>
2009	-0.0	1.8	-18.4	-2.7	0.0	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.0</b>
2010	0.0	1.8	-18.4	-2.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.0</b>
2011	-0.0	1.8	-18.5	-2.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.3</b>
2012	0.0	1.8	-17.7	-2.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-18.5</b>
2013	-0.0	1.7	-18.4	-3.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.3</b>
2014	-0.0	1.7	-18.3	-3.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.2</b>
2015	-0.0	1.7	-18.1	-3.1	-0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.4</b>
2016	-0.0	1.6	-17.7	-3.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	<b>-18.7</b>
2017	-0.0	1.6	-18.2	-3.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.5</b>
2018	-0.0	1.6	-18.0	-3.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.4</b>
2019	-0.0	1.5	-18.0	-3.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.6</b>
2020	-0.0	1.5	-18.4	-3.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-20.0</b>
2021	-0.0	1.5	-17.8	-3.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	<b>-19.4</b>
2022	-0.0	1.4	-17.6	-3.4	0.2	0.0	0.2	<b>-19.2</b>

Table B3: Agriculture GHG emissions.

Calendar Year	Agriculture Electricity	Agriculture Gas	Agriculture 'Other'	Agriculture Livestock	Agriculture Soils	Agriculture Total
2005	0.4	0.1	3.1	10.8	3.4	<b>17.7</b>
2006	0.4	0.0	3.9	10.6	3.3	<b>18.3</b>
2007	0.4	0.0	3.2	10.5	3.3	<b>17.3</b>
2008	0.4	0.0	4.9	10.1	3.2	<b>18.6</b>
2009	0.3	0.0	4.4	10.0	3.2	<b>18.0</b>
2010	0.3	0.0	4.2	10.1	3.3	<b>18.0</b>
2011	0.3	0.0	3.2	10.0	3.3	<b>16.9</b>
2012	0.3	0.0	3.7	10.0	3.3	<b>17.4</b>
2013	0.3	0.0	3.7	9.9	3.3	<b>17.3</b>
2014	0.3	0.0	3.3	10.1	3.5	<b>17.2</b>
2015	0.2	0.0	3.7	10.2	3.5	<b>17.6</b>
2016	0.2	0.1	4.1	10.2	3.4	<b>17.9</b>
2017	0.2	0.0	4.3	10.2	3.4	<b>18.2</b>
2018	0.1	0.0	4.0	10.0	3.4	<b>17.5</b>
2019	0.1	0.0	4.0	10.0	3.4	<b>17.5</b>
2020	0.1	0.0	3.9	9.9	3.1	<b>17.0</b>
2021	0.1	0.0	4.1	9.9	3.2	<b>17.4</b>
2022	0.1	0.0	1.8	9.9	3.0	<b>14.8</b>


To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER C</b>
Subject	Farming in Protected Landscapes	
Author	Helen Richardson, Landscape Projects Officer	
Date	30/04/2025	

## Farming in Protected Landscapes

Quantock Hills National Landscape 2021- 2025



**Quantock  
Hills  
National  
Landscape**



**£892,954** allocated  
**£834,026** claimed  
**£1,491,914** total project value  
**73** projects supported  
**60** projects completed  
**7,494** ha of land supported



**39 projects delivering for climate**

- 951 ha managed with regenerative farming techniques
- 8 projects protecting watercourses
- 12 projects helping to reduce flood risk
- 11 projects reducing ChG emissions
- 10 projects reducing reliance on inputs

**46 projects delivering for nature**

- 2.8km of hedgerows planted or restored
- 2,203 ha of positive management on SSSIs
- 10 projects improving water quality
- 50 ha of invasive species management
- 122.6 ha of species-rich grassland created or enhanced

**26 projects delivering for people**

- 16 projects to support public engagement in land management
- 34 volunteers engaged
- 575m of new permissive paths created
- 15 events improving understanding of sustainable food production.

**49 projects delivering for place**

- 11 historic structures or features conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- 33 projects increasing the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses
- 4 new farm products launched

**Working Orchards: £41,780.85**  
A project aimed at incentivising productive management of small traditional orchards, promoting the survival of orchard enterprises on farms, and ensuring that local cider and juice producers can purchase fruit locally by establishing new market connections.

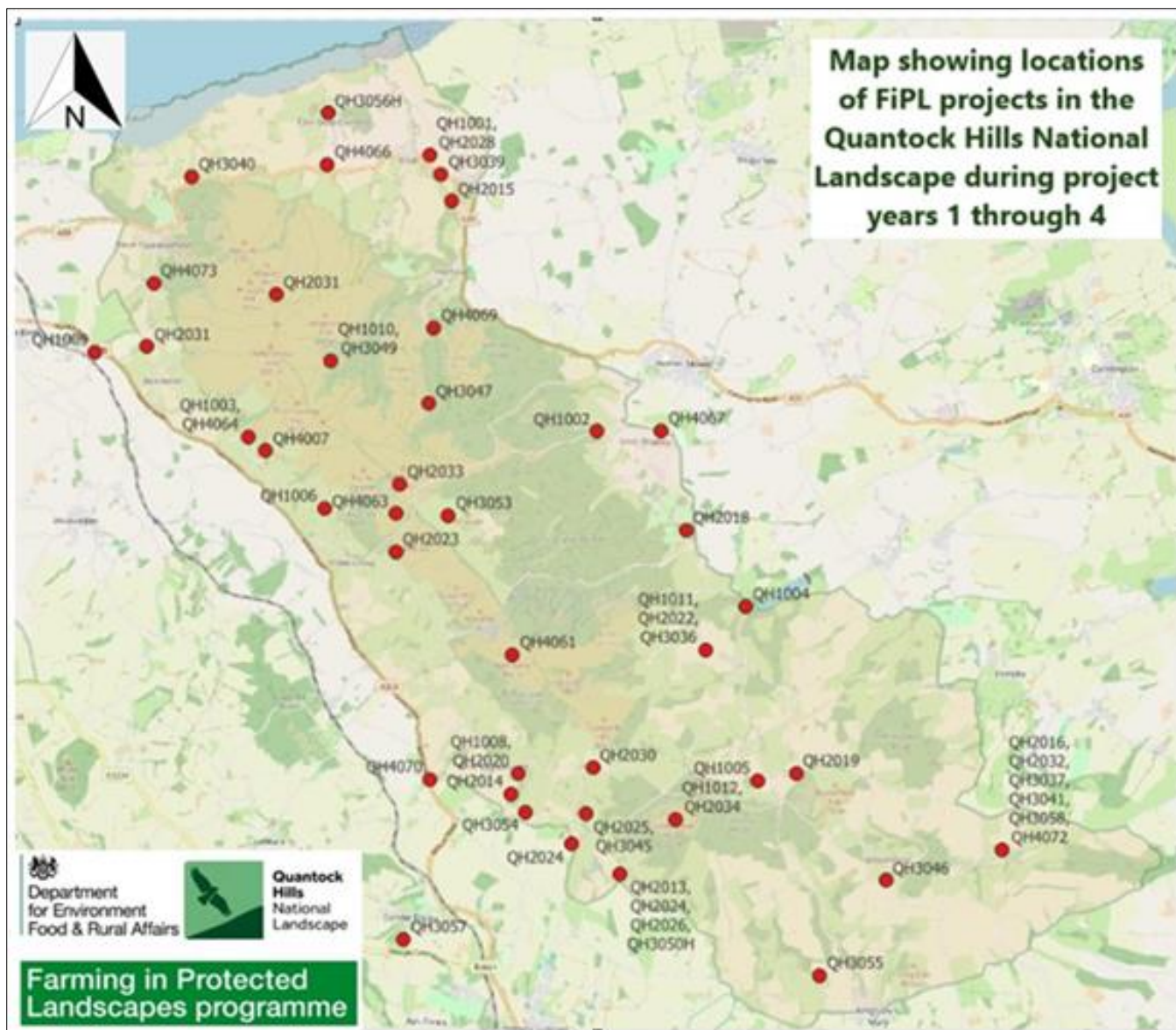
**Deer Extraction Equipment: £6,351**  
FiPL funding supported the purchase of a new livestock trailer and powered tracked wheelbarrow to support the management of the deer population on the Quantock Hills. The equipment will enable safer and more efficient removal of deer carcasses for the National Trust's wildlife management team.

**Elms & Butterflies £6,744**  
A project aiming to re-establish (disease resistant) Elm trees over the Quantock Landscape providing habitat for the rare White Letter Hairstreak and Brown Hairstreak butterflies.

**Tithe Barn Restoration: £180,438**  
The Grade II listed buildings, historically used for agricultural production, were in need of repair to address both the safety risk to human health and the risk to the loss of heritage.

### Recommendation(s):

1. The JAC notes the report.



To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER D</b>
Subject	Partnership Update	
Author	Iain Porter, Manager	
Date	30/04/2025	

## 1. Staffing

- a. Land Management Skills Project Officer. This post is funded by the HPC s106 / DCO and will deliver the Land Management Skills Scheme on behalf of Somerset Council. The post was open for recruitment in November 2024 and the Team had appointed their preferred candidate. Unfortunately in early December the candidate withdrew from the post. Due to the restructuring in Somerset Council there were further delays in securing permission to go out to recruitment again and with the team's workload it was only possible to advertise at the beginning of April.
- b. Vacant posts. With Somerset Council's restructure the Team had to identify posts that it wished to remain open, i.e. that the team would be looking to recruit to when resources allowed. The current vacant posts are:
  - i. Development Officer.
  - ii. Community Engagement Ranger.
- c. Team Structure. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 Somerset Council new structure was implemented. As part of the restructure programme all posts below head of service level are due to be evaluated based on the new grading and evaluation criteria / system. I have requested to HR and senior managers that we undertake a team review at the same time to assess the required structure based on priorities from the Partnership, Defra and the outcome of the future funding agreement. I expect that this work will start in late summer / early autumn to align with the Defra engagement on the future funding agreement.

## 2. National Landscape Association

- a. Recent activity from the NLA includes support in the development of the Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcome Framework apportionment and more recently support in securing data on greenhouse gas emissions at a protected landscape scale. The NLA team has recently been joined by Clare Downing, Climate Change Coordinator, who will be supporting the team in the development of the Quantock Hills Climate Adaptation Plan.
- b. A significant element of work for the NLA has been engagement with Defra over the future funding of National Landscapes in England (a separate process occurs in Wales). Over this last quarter the NLA has convened meetings of lead officers to collate evidence of impact of funding cuts (based on potential 10% cuts) and provide project proposals.



### 3. Consultations

- a. Land Use Framework (Open - 31 January 2025. Deadline for responses – 25 April 2025 ). Earlier this year Defra opened consultation on the Land Use Framework, a strategy that will interact with other foundational strategies such as the Environmental Improvement Plan, the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan and the Sustainable Food Strategy. Government's aim is that the framework will support sustainable growth (housing and energy) while meeting the targets of food security and nature recovery. [Land Use Consultation - Defra - Citizen Space](#)
- b. One question related specifically to Protected Landscapes and the Team has submitted the response below. For copies of the response to the full consultation please contact the author.

**QUESTION 10:** What changes are needed to accelerate 30by30 delivery, including by enabling Protected Landscapes to contribute more? Please provide any specific suggestions.

- Strengthened Protected Landscapes legislation (around governance and regulations or duties on key actors) with a greater focus on nature
- Tools: such as greater alignment of existing Defra schemes with the 30by30 criteria.
- Resources: such as funding or guidance for those managing Protected Landscapes for nature.
- Other (please specify).

*There are two main barriers to enabling 30by30 delivery in Protected Landscapes. The first is the lack of understanding and enforcement of the recently enhanced duty on relevant authorities (LURA 2024) and the second is the lack of long-term resources for Protected Landscape bodies to be able to plan delivery of 30by30 actions.*

*The recent enhancement of the duty in respect of Protected Landscapes has been welcome however a lack of awareness and conflicting messaging e.g. Defra guidance vs. Planning Inspector decisions, is in danger of reducing the ability of Protected Landscapes to be able to utilise the duty to deliver 30by30. For this reason we do not believe that further strengthening of legislation is required BUT strengthening and embedding of current legislation is.*

*For the past seven years funding to the Protected Landscape bodies has been on an annual basis with some funding becoming available in-year. While the increase in capital funding has been welcomed and has led to significant action on the ground, without resource to manage projects / programmes and time to plan, it will not deliver the significant long lasting outcomes required to meet 30by30.*

*An approach which should be seen as a success is the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme, which included revenue resource – for staff or support – as well as a capital fund. Being longer-term, three years initially, the fund allowed PL Teams to plan and target the outputs that would provide greater benefits for 30by30. A funding agreement aligned with a Protected Landscapes Management Plan would allow resourcing to be planned, allow time for trusted relationships to be built and for funding, including green / private finance, to be secured.*



- c. Heather and grass burning (Open – 31 March 2025. Deadline for responses - 25 May 2025). The consultation on the heath and grass burning guidance / regulations recently opened. This follows a number of workshops for stakeholders seeking views on the current guidance / regulations and potential changes needed. The consultation includes seeking views on changes to when licences to burn grass / heather are required, mandatory compliance with any updated Heather & Grass Management Code (due summer 2025) and potential requirements for training. With the use of burning (swaling) as a management tool on the Quantock Hills it will be important to ensure the new code and regulations do not restrict management activity on the Quantock Hills. The team will be submitting a respond and invite other stakeholders and partners to consider the consultation and submit their own response if appropriate - [Heather and grass burning in England - GOV.UK](#)

#### 4. Partnership

- a. With Cllr Dixie Darch's resignation as a Somerset Council representative from the JAC there was a requirement to elect a new vice-chair from the existing Somerset Council representatives. At the January 2025 meeting Cllr Alan Bradford was approved as vice-chairman of the JAC with effect from this meeting (30<sup>th</sup> April 2025). With this processing being held there is no requirement for an election of a vice-chair at this meeting.
- b. Changes to the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee (Partnership) Membership, Terms of Reference, structure and operation. The current terms of reference were adopted in April 2023 to ensure compliance with the new unitary authority. It is good practice to review governance on a regular basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The majority of the proposed amendments are clarifications in text, the inclusion of the new members and inclusion on co-opted members, which is a common element in other protected landscape governance documents. Amendments include:
- i. Change 'AONB' to 'National Landscape' throughout.
  - ii. Section 2.1 – inserts 'Statutory' to read ...the Statutory Management Plan...
  - iii. Section 4.2 – includes section 89 of the CRoW Act.
  - iv. Section 4.3 – include 'local organisations' under membership.
  - v. Section 4.3 – Add that organisations can send substitutes if the named person is unable to attend a meeting.
  - vi. Section 4.4 – Add 'South West Heritage Trust' as approved by the JAC April 2024.
  - vii. Section 4.5 – New section to allow the co-option of non-voting members.
  - viii. Section 4.10 – Updated member number.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

**1. The JAC notes the report.**

**2. The JAC approves the updated Terms of Reference.**



### SCHEDULE 1

## QUANTOCK HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE, STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

Date of adoption: 18/07/2023

Updated: 30/04/2025

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. These are the Terms of Reference for the Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership, setting out the structure of the Partnership and the functions of its constituent elements, particularly the Committee and Steering Group. They update the terms set out in the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference (last reviewed and agreed October 2021).

### 2. Purpose of the Partnership

- 2.1. The Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership was established as a Joint Advisory Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1975. The Partnership champions the National Landscape, providing a united voice to promote its care and management. By bringing together a wide range of interests the Partnership, through its dedicated team of staff and in consultation with others, develops and reviews the **Statutory** Management Plan and takes direct action by leading and supporting initiatives in the area.
- 2.2. The Partnership is **a legal entity constituted** as a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to advise the constituent local authorities. The Partnership (JAC) does not have executive powers over the funding partners rather it acts in an advisory and consultative capacity to the funding partners.
- 2.3. The Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership:
- Promotes and champions the vision and aims of the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
  - Raises awareness among the public and stakeholders of the special qualities of the area and its importance.
  - Enables the agreement of common policies and strategies.
  - Ensures implementation of the management plan by enabling and delivering direct action to conserve and enhance the Quantock Hills.
  - Influences and assists wider work within the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
  - Promotes innovation, acting as a test bed for new ideas and approaches.
  - Plays a lead role in championing sustainable development.
  - Enables work undertaken in the Quantock Hills National Landscape to be monitored and evaluated.
  - Encourages and recruits wide political and financial support for management measures.

- Encourages and develops community involvement in the management of the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
- Enables the exchange of information and ideas.

### **3. Partnership Funding**

- 3.1. The funding arrangements for the Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership will be set out in a 'Statement of Intent' (Sol) between the funding partners which sets out a shared vision for the National Landscape Partnership and Team, provides a framework for the delivery of the duties and obligations of the different parties and, so far as possible, will give the Partnership a secure financial future.
- 3.2. The annual budget will be agreed by the funding partners in accordance with their Sol. Decisions regarding the annual strategic priorities for this budget will be the responsibility of the Quantock Hills Partnership. Day to day management of the budget will be the responsibility of the National Landscape Manager who will follow the financial standing orders of the host authority. The National Landscape Steering Group will monitor the budget quarterly and provide guidance/advice to the National Landscape Manager as required.

### **4. The Partnership objectives**

- 4.1. The purpose of the Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership is to be responsible for delivering the statutory duties and requirements for the Quantock Hills National Landscape as set out in Section IV of the Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.
- 4.2. The objectives of the Partnership are to:
  - Ensure the development, adoption and regular review of the statutory management plan for the Quantock Hills National Landscape as required under **Section 89 of** the CROW Act 2000.
  - Develop and promote a vision for the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
  - Co-ordinate and endorse the production and implementation of the management plan to achieve its objectives.
  - Consider, debate and recommend courses of action on the main issues relating to the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
  - Accommodate new requirements resulting from changes in national legislation or policy relevant to the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
  - Consider and review the management structure to enable future implementation of the management plan.
  - Receive, review and approve the work programmes of the National Landscape Team, business plans and annual reviews, giving consideration to financial and resource issues.
- 4.3. Membership of the Partnership includes representatives from local authorities, statutory agencies, regional bodies, **local organisations** and landowner representatives. Each partner organisation will be required to nominate a representative (6 for Somerset Council [see Appendix 1] and 4 for

Parish Councils [see Appendix 2]) to regularly attend meetings and feedback / co-ordinate any activities within their organisation as required. Support staff may also attend. Substitutes may deputise but only in circumstances which prevent the attendance of the usual nominated representative.

4.4. Each member may cast one vote. Local authority representation will be by elected member appointed by the authority. Members are as follows:

- Somerset Council – 6 representatives
- Parish Councils Representatives – 4 representatives
- Country Land and Business Association – 1 representative
- Forestry England – 1 representative
- Friends of Quantock – 1 representative
- Quantock Commoners Association – 1 representative
- Natural England – 1 representative
- Somerset Local Access Forum – 1 representative
- The National Trust – 1 representative
- South West Heritage Trust - 1 representative

4.5. The Partnership may, at its discretion, co-opt a non-voting member onto the partnership where that member would add experience, knowledge, skills that would aid the Partnership in delivering its Statutory purposes. There will be no more than 2 co-opted membership partners on the Partnership at any one time. Co-opted members, due to being nominated and members of the partnership due to their skills, knowledge, experience or knowledge, will not be able to substitute their position onto others.

4.6. Partnership members are expected to promote the purposes of National Landscape designation and the work of the Partnership and Team within their organisation and/or sector.

4.7. The Partnership Chair:

- The Partnership will elect a Chair on a biennial basis. A sitting Chair may be re-elected for a further successive term to serve a maximum term of 4 years.
- The Partnership will also elect a Vice-Chair on a biennial basis. The role of Vice-Chair is to support the Chair as an ambassador for the Quantock Hills and to provide cover for attending required meetings. When acting in place of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will be expected to represent independently of the organisation they normally represent. A sitting Vice-Chair may be re-elected for a further successive term to serve a maximum term of 4 years.
- Either the Chair or Vice-Chair shall be appointed from Partnership members of Somerset Council. It will be expected that whichever role is not filled by a Somerset Council member is filled by a Partnership member not from Somerset Council.
- Nominations for election will be sought from the Partnership at the meeting preceding the end of Chair's and Vice-Chair's term or if the Chair or Vice-Chair stands down.
- The Chair / Vice-Chair can stand down, giving reasonable notice.

- The election of Chair and Vice-Chair will be undertaken at periods to ensure linkage to the local authority electoral cycle.
- 4.8. Members of the public may raise an issue with the Partnership if it cannot be dealt with by the National Landscape Team. The issue must be presented in writing and sent to the chair at least ten days before the date of the meeting. A written response will be made within three weeks of the meeting.
  - 4.9. Where an item on the agenda is of overriding importance to an organisation or individual not normally represented, they may be invited to attend for that item at the discretion of the Chair.
  - 4.10. At least 8 Partnership members must be present, based on a total membership of 18, for a Partnership to be quorate. This equates to 44% of the membership.
  - 4.11. Partnership members will be responsible for endorsing recommendations and proposals. If necessary this will be conducted by a vote. Each organisation holds one vote, aside for Somerset Council who hold 6 and Parish Councils who hold 4 votes. For decisions relating to the funding of the National Landscape Team and other core costs only the core funding bodies have the right to vote.
  - 4.12. Partnership members must declare any financial or other interest prior to discussion of the relevant item by the Committee.
  - 4.13. With regard to press and publicity, only the Chair of the Partnership and, under the Chair's delegation, the National Landscape Team Manager or any other person with the Chair's specific authorisation, can speak on behalf of the National Landscape Partnership.
  - 4.14. The Partnership will meet at least four times each year, although if necessary additional meetings will be arranged as and when required.
  - 4.15. Meetings shall be subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and shall be open to the press and public, where the public will be able to present questions to the Committee.

## **5. Steering Group**

- 5.1 Purpose: To provide strategic direction and support to the National Landscape Team to establish, monitoring and review the management process for the Quantock Hills National Landscape to ensure that it supports the Local Planning Authorities and other partner organisations in fulfilling the statutory requirements set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 5.1.1 Principal roles and responsibilities of the National Landscape Steering Group will be:

- (a) To create and keep under review the management structure for the Quantock Hills National Landscape JAC.
  - (b) To make recommendations to the National Landscape Partnership on its membership.
  - (c) To advise the National Landscape on methods of engaging the Board members, potential Board members and the communities of the Quantock Hills to ensure their active involvement in National Landscape work.
  - (d) To initiate and oversee appointment of the National Landscape Team Manager.
  - (e) To agree a draft of the Statutory Management Plan for submission to the Partnership, constituent local planning authorities, Natural England and the Secretary of State for approval.
  - (f) To receive progress reports on the work of the National Landscape Team.
  - (g) To maintain focus on the delivery of the Management Plan by the National Landscape Team and Partnership.
  - (h) To ensure that the work of the Partnership is integrated with the policy making functions of its partners and visa-versa.
  - (i) To ensure that all resources available for National Landscape management are used to their best advantage.
  - (j) To ensure effective connection is made between the spatial planning and other responsibilities of the local authorities and the National Landscape management planning process.
  - (k) To support the members at the meetings of the Partnership.
  - (l) To support the JAC by proposing agenda items for Partnership meetings.
- 5.2 The Steering Group should meet no less than four times a year and its meetings should be timed so that they link with the meetings of the Partnership.
- 5.3 Membership of the Steering Group:
- a) Chair of the Partnership.
  - b) Vice-Chair of the Partnership.
  - c) Somerset Council Officers – A number of relevant officers to represent Planning / Landscape / Communities (Cultural Services) / Climate, Environment & Sustainability / Public Health (Health improvement).
  - d) Natural England.
  - e) National Landscape Team Manager.
- 5.4 The Steering Group will elect a Chair from amongst its members (neither the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Partnership nor the National Landscape Team Manager are eligible for this post); the expected term is two years.
- 5.5 Should a vote be required, each member present will have one vote, with the Chair having a second or casting vote if required.
- 5.6 The Secretariat for the Steering Group will be provided by the National Landscape Team.

## 6. The National Landscape Team

6.1. The National Landscape Team is employed to service the Partnership and enable fulfilment of its purposes and objectives. The team is an independent unit working to the Partnership. Core functions of the team are set below:

- Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the National Landscape vision and the statutory National Landscape Management Plan.
- Promoting the National Landscape vision and management plan to help distinguish the National Landscape from adjacent countryside.
- Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan.
- Advising Local Authorities on their activities within National Landscapes, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service (attain the highest possible standards) in countryside management.
- Monitoring and reporting on progress against National Landscape Management Plan targets.
- Monitoring National Landscape condition.
- Accessing resources for management activities.
- Working with and contributing to the **National Landscape Association (NLA)** activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally.
- Providing a management role to co-ordinate National Landscape protection through the actions of the National Landscape Team, the partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level.
- Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the National Landscape.
- Providing landscape related planning advice.



### ***Appendix 1: Somerset Council Elected Member representation***

- 1) Somerset Council will appoint 6 representatives on to the Quantock Hills Partnership as the only local planning authority covering the geographical area of the Quantock Hills National Landscape. In appointing members Somerset Council shall consider:
  - a. Geographical interest – The member represents a division that contains part of or is adjacent to the Quantock Hills National Landscape.
  - b. Thematic interest – The member has knowledge / experience of the main areas of interest of the Quantock Hills National Landscape [Farming, climate & nature recovery, people engagement, economic development].
  - c. Community interest – The member represents community development interests.

## **Appendix 2: Parish Council Election Process**

With regard to the representation of Parish Councils, it is agreed that the Quantock Hills Partnership has four Parish Councils members. Parishes that lie within or about the Quantock Hills National Landscape Boundary (see table 1) will be eligible to put forward a member for election.

<b>Table 1: Parish and Town Councils whose boundaries that lie wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Quantock Hills National Landscape</b>		
Broomfield	Bishops Lydeard & Cothelstone	Bicknoller
Enmore	Combe Florey	Crowcombe
Goathurst	Kingston St Mary	East Quantoxhead
Nether Stowey	Lydeard St Lawrence	Holford
North Petherton	West Bagborough	Kilve
Over Stowey	West Monkton	Sampford Brett
Spaxton	West Quantoxhead	Stringston

The elections will be administered by Somerset Associations of Local Councils.

Each candidate will be required to currently hold a position as a parish councillor on one of the parish councils within their local authority area and should not be intending to stand down at the next parish council elections.

Candidates should preferably not be an elected member of a principal local authority: it is hoped that this will ensure that those elected to the Quantock Hills Partnership will be better able to focus on issues at the parish council level and give the necessary time and commitment to the work of the Partnership.

Each of the four parish councillors elected to the Quantock Hills Partnership would hold the post for a four-year term from the date of the Parish Council elections.

### **Role of Parish Council Members on the Partnership.**

The role of parish council members of the Committee will be as follows: 'A parish member will be regarded as broadly representative of parish interests but is not a delegate, so cannot be mandated by the parish councils concerned. The involvement of parish members is to ensure that the Quantock Hills Partnership takes full account of the needs of their local communities and to improve the links between the Partnership and local residents. Parish members should not just be spokespeople for the local issues, but ambassadors for wider concerns. Parish members are appointed to reflect 'truly local concerns' but, in that, to represent the wider National Landscape view, not just that of their own parish.'

### **Appendix 3: Guidance on the declaration of interests at meetings.**

The Quantock Hills Partnership is constituted as a Joint Advisory Committee of Somerset Council. As such it adheres to the requirements of local authority committees under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **When do members need to declare their interests?**

Members need to declare their interests at all meetings where matters being discussed or to be discussed affect their interest. Partnership members are personally responsible for deciding whether or not they should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful to know early on if others think that a potential conflict of interest might arise. It is also important that other members, stakeholders and the wider community know about any interest members may have when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the partnership and wider public as open and honest.

#### **What is a personal interest?**

You have a personal interest in matter if that matter affects the well-being or financial position of you, your relatives or your friends more than it would affect other people in the Partnership's area. You must look at how any decision reached in a meeting would affect:

- You and their jobs and businesses;
- You and their employee's firms, you or they are a partner of, and companies you or they are a director of;
- Corporate bodies in which you or they have a beneficial interest in a type of share with a face value (as shown on the share certificate) worth more than £5,000; and
- The following organisations in which you or they hold a position of general control or management:
  - organisations where you or they represent your authority.
  - other public authorities or organisations which deliver public services.
  - companies, industrial and provident societies, charities or charitable organisations.
  - organisations with a main purpose which includes influencing public opinion or policy.
  - trade unions or professional associations.

Under the Code of Conduct: · "A relative" is a partner (someone you are married to or live with as if you were married), a parent, a parent-in-law, a son or daughter, a step-son or step-daughter, the child of a partner, a brother or sister, a grandparent, a grandchild, an uncle or aunt, a nephew or niece, or the partner of any of these people; · "Other people in the authority's area" are people who live in the authority's area or who pay council tax or business rates to your authority.

You need only declare the interests you know about, and you do not need to investigate the business or other interests of your relatives and friends. A personal interest can affect you, your relatives or your friends positively or negatively. So, if you or they would stand to lose by the decision you should also declare it.

#### **What do I need to do if I have a personal interest in a matter?**

You must declare and give details of the interest before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you. Agendas of the Quantock Hills Partnership ask for the declaration of interests at the start of the meeting. However, if you are not aware of a potential personal

interest until you reach an item then as long as you declare it as soon as it becomes known to you, you will not be in breach of the Code.

**Do I need to declare a personal interest at a meeting if it is on the Register of Interests (for local authority members)?**

Yes – even if your interest is shown in the Register of Interests, you must also declare it in meetings where matters affecting that interest are discussed.

**Can I stay in the meeting if I have a personal interest?**

You can still take part in the meeting and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.

**What is a prejudicial interest?**

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public who knows the relevant facts would reasonably think is so significant that it is likely to affect your judgement of the public interest. You must ask yourself whether a member of the public – if he or she knows all the facts – would think that your personal interest was so significant that it would probably affect your decision on the matter. If he or she would think your judgement would be affected, then you have a prejudicial interest.

**What is not a prejudicial interest?** The Model Code of Conduct sets out some general exceptions from prejudicial interests. It says that you may not have a prejudicial interest if the matter relates to:

- Another relevant authority which you are a member of, for example, a parish council or a joint authority.
- Another public authority in which you hold a position of general control or management.
- An organisation where you represent your authority.

**What do I need to do if I have a prejudicial interest?**

If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must leave the room. You cannot take part in discussions on that matter or try to improperly influence anyone else's decision on the matter. It is important that you leave the room, so you and your Partnership are seen to be acting in an appropriate and unbiased way, and to remove pressure from the remaining members.

The Quantock Hills Partnership is constituted as a Joint Advisory Committee of Somerset Council. As such it falls under the Code of Conducts of Somerset Council.

[Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020](#)

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER E</b>
Subject	Planning Report	
Author	Alex Meletiou, Landscape Planning Officer	
Date	30/04/2025	

## 1. Planning applications

- a. From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 the National Landscape received 44 planning applications for consideration and 5 applications for timber felling licences, which have been followed up from the published lists or by direct invitation to comment. The level of applications is a little less than average.
- b. The distribution between the two planning regions is listed below together with the number of applications within each Parish (table E1) and by application type (table E2).

Table E1. Planning applications by area.

<b>Planning North</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Planning West</b>	<b>No</b>
Bridgwater	1	Bicknoller	2
Broomfield	2	Crowcombe	2
Cannington	1	Cothelstone	1
H. Beucamp	1	Kingston St Mary	1
Enmore	1	Kilve	4
Nether Stowey	2	Staplegrove	1
North Petherton	1	West Bagborough	7
Over Stowey	10		
Spaxton	6		
Stockland Bristol	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

Table E1. Planning applications by type

<b>Type</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>No</b>
Agricultural buildings	7	Minor works	3
Agricultural conversions	2	National Grid	1
Agricultural dwellings	1	Natural ponds	1
Domestic extensions	9	Neighbourhood plans	2
Domestic storage buildings	1	New dwellings	4
Educational facilities	2	Scoping opinion	1
Golf club alterations	1	Solor – PV panels	1
Gymnasium	1	Tele mast	2
Holiday lodge	1	Variation to conditions	2
Major residential	2	<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

6 applications were either objected to or comments made raising some concerns.

## 2. Current Issues

### a. Cheddar 2 SRO (Source and Transfer Strategic Resource Option).

A new project under active consideration is being proposed for a second reservoir at Cheddar. Planning was granted in 2014 for a second reservoir but lapsed in 2021 as it was never instigated.

South West Water ("SWW"), Wessex Water ("WW"), and Bristol Water ("BRL") are the three companies involved and the agents Stantec Ltd have contacted us for initial discussions. Although there will be no direct impact on the National Landscape from the reservoir itself, there will be a new water transfer system which will actually require several new pipelines to be constructed to allow connection into the existing supply network.

A length of pipeline will be constructed from the existing Morehouse water service reservoir (to the east of the NL boundary) through a connection point with the existing network west of East Quantoxhead. This will require approximately 3.5 kilometres of pipeline within the National Landscape which will be 600mm diameter and approximately 2.5 meters below ground. The main concern will be the working width required which will be dependent on the natural terrain, vegetation, topography etc as well as potential pumping stations and service reservoirs.

### b. Enforcement. I contacted the Enforcement section of the Council regarding a large amount of hardcore deposited in a field at West Bagborough. I had a very quick response which was pleasing considering the lack of communication regarding enforcement on previous cases. I was also given a named individual who would be the contact if hedges/trees/landscape were affected by illegal or inappropriate development. This at least seems to be a step forward in our relations with the planning department.

### c. Timbercombe, Broomfield. There has been a recent refusal of an application to erect 35 no: solar panels to provide domestic power to the property. The application was refused, and I quote the reason given by the planning authority.

*"The proposed solar panels would be located within a field to the north of Timbercombe and the property they would serve. The site is located within the National Landscape of the Quantock Hills, which has the highest status of protection and where great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the area.*

*The proposed solar panels would be of a scale, design and appearance that would be out of keeping with the natural beauty of the designated landscape and would have detrimental visual impact on the surrounding area. The site would be visible from public vantage points within the locality and any visual screening from existing trees and hedgerows would be limited. The supporting information submitted regarding mitigation to limit the impact on the character and visual amenity of the area is considered insufficient and would not, in itself, result in a harm that could be successfully negated.*

*The proposed development would have limited public benefits and would go against the Local Planning Authority's statutory duty to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of the*

*Protected Landscapes, which the Quantock Hills is part of. The development would not conserve or enhance the exceptional quality of the landscape and as such it is considered that the proposal would be contrary to Policies D2 and D19 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan, Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework and guidance in relation to The Protected Landscapes duty."*

This is good news in relation to the LPA's consideration of the new duty "to seek to further..." about which the JAC has been informed. (See also below in 3. Planning Matters).

Notwithstanding the positive nature of the above, I am struggling to understand the last sentence of the second paragraph!

### **3. Planning matters**

- a. New duties on responsible authorities - section 245 LURA and section 85 CRow Act. The National Landscape Association has provided some comments on a recent judgement in the case of New Forest NPA v SoS and Mr Simon Lillington. Overall the judge has not been overly helpful in his interpretation of the new law. The judgement states that if there is no harm in the development then that in itself is enough to abide by the new duty to seek to further the purpose etc. Natural England's interpretation and Defra's guidance both show that this is an active duty and therefore there needs to be positive action from the LPA which seems to have been ignored by the judge in this case. No doubt there will be further case law and hopefully Defra will publish its final version in due course.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- 1. The JAC notes the report.**



To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER F</b>
Subject	Finance Report	
Author	Iain Porter, Manager	
Date	30/04/2025	

## 1. 2024/25 Financial overrun (draft)

- a. Due to updates and integration of new systems within Somerset Council's finance software (D365) financial closing was extended to mid-April. This has delayed the Team getting the final overrun report with "month 13" transactions yet to go through the budget lines. Table F1 show the draft summary overrun for the Teams budgets.
- b. The core grant from Defra is shown as a debtor accrual due to issues on the Defra procurement system with Somerset Councils account (wrong bank details). This has meant the second instalment of the core grant has not been received. Defra have confirmed that the issue is being investigated urgently and hope to make payment in mid to late April.
- c. The debtor accrual for the QLPS is a normal procedure as the grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund is claimed retrospectively and the payment of the latest period (January – March 2025) is due late April.
- d. Overall the budget position is where it was expected to be. A slight overspend in Core is due to the error by fleet in ordering the replacement team vehicles meaning that we paid for one temporary 4x4 hire as well as the full years lease on the new vehicles which arrived at the end of March. There will be some further payments that were due to 2024/25, but this is not expected to be more than £3,000.
- e. The Partnership may remember that last financial year (2023/24) Somerset Council's contribution was lower. This was due to not being able to identify where the budget from the district councils (in the previous two-tier system) had been allocated. The finance team at Somerset Council were able to trace the budget and have allocated it to the Reserves Account meaning that it is higher than anticipated.
- f. While the overall balance is higher than last year we expect some of this to be repaid to Defra as full expenditure of the Capital Access Grant did not occur – The Capital Access Grant was paid in advance. We are waiting for guidance as to whether this grant is paid back or deducted from Defra 2025/26 grant.
- g. Appendix F1 has further budget information include spend on the individual line items. Please note these are draft and the final overrun figures will be made available in May.

Table F1: Summary overrun budget 2024/25.

<i>Opening Balance (brought forward 2023/24)</i>				-101,700
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Balance</b>	
Core	319,993	-216,364	103,630	
Landscape Projects	620,984	-636,799	-15,815	
Projects	55,090	-73,176	-18,086	
QLPS	614,524	-517,206	97,318	
Land Management	43,285	-20,034	23,251	
Reserves Account	110,218	-221,279	-111,061	
<i>Budget balance</i>				-22,464
Debtor accruals (core)				-96,284
Debtor accruals (QLPS)				-97,318

Carry forward (LMSS)	14,200
Carry forward (CAG)	9,000
Carry forward (FiPL)	25,000
Carry forward (QLPS redundancy+pension strain)	19,000
Earmarked Reserves (To cover core team redundancy)	21,500
Balance	-127,366

## 2. 2025/26 budgets and Team Business Plan

- a. On 31 March Defra issued their intention to fund confirmation for the Quantock Hills National Landscape Team. This is an extension of the current contract (grant agreement) for a further year pending the development of a future funding agreement. However, given the current financial situation in the national government departments, the funding settlement should be seen as a success and a vote of confidence in National Landscapes ability to deliver on national objectives.

Table F2: Defra grant funding settlement (Quantock Hills National Landscape) 2025/26.

Grant	Amount (£)	Notes
Core (revenue)	£190,604	Continuation of base amount from 2023/24 and does not include the 2024/25 revenue uplift. This is a real-term reduction due to increasing salary costs (NI increases) and inflation.
Farming in Protected Landscapes	£250,980	As advised earlier in the year Defra have extended the full FiPL programme for a further year. This is a similar level to the 2024/25 grant not including the Historic Building Restoration Fund. The objectives for FiPL remain as Nature, Climate, People and Place.
Capital Fund (new)	£119,207	A new one year project fund with eligible spend on delivery of 30by30 and innovation / income generation. Defra have yet to confirm the specific criteria but have confirmed it is a capital only pot. With limited scope for spend and time constraints there is a requirement to start delivery of these projects early in the financial year.
Access for All	£60,292	A one-year extension of the Access for All funding including a significant uplift (members may remember that funding was allocated in year one and three). As in previous years this is capital funding with Defra confirming the criteria as (a) enhancement / creation of accessible path (b) creation of accessible toilets and rest stops (c) installation of accessible gates and gaps (d) Provision of visits to the PL (e) Provision of new equipment to enhance volunteer experience (f) enhanced route wayfinding on accessible / easy access routes.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£621,083</b>	

- b. The Team's 2025/26 Business Plan budgets have been updated (see attached) though the detailed project planning for the Capital Fund and Access for All will happen in May.

### Recommendation(s):

#### 1. The JAC notes the report.

**Appendix F1: Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership draft 2024/25 budget outrun**

Note – Expenditure is shown as positive figure and income is shown as negative figure

Table F3: Quantock Hills National Landscape Team – Core Budget 2024/25 outrun

<b>Expenditure type</b>	<b>£</b>		<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Salaries, NI, SA	241,228		Defra core grant <sup>c</sup>	-168,376
Training	3,879			
Travel & vehicle costs <sup>a</sup>	36,676		Recharges (staff)	-21,613
Rents, rates, elec, water	16,366		Recharges (HPC) <sup>d</sup>	0
Stationary, post, phones, printing	1,163		Somerset Council	-24,970
Equipment, materials, PPE, uniform	6,087		Cont - FotQ	-1,000
Literature, publications, publicity	3,272		Sales / income <sup>e</sup>	0
Meeting costs	1,283		Other	-405
Management Fee, Insurances	9,404			
Memberships (NLA / EP) <sup>b</sup>	135			
Research & Development	500			
<b>Total</b>	<b>£319,993</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>£216,364</b>

Notes:

- Vehicles costs are higher due to requirement to short-term hire one 4x4 vehicle for the team due to Somerset Council fleet error in ordering new lease hire vehicles.
- National Landscape Association membership contributions not showing. This is being investigated.
- Defra core grant final payment has not been received. Defra aware of this and this should be received by late April.
- Recharges (HPC) are for contribution towards the Project Manager post, which came to the end of its fixed-term contract in June 2024. The funding from the HPC S106 / DCO is due for payment in month 13.
- The National Landscape Team receives income from book sales and event ticketing. This is relatively small amounts and is not showing at the transfer from the imprest account into the main budgets has not occurred.

Table F4: Quantock Hills National Landscape Team - Landscape Projects Budget 2024/25 outrun

<b>Landscape Projects</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<i>Farming in Protected Landscapes Admin</i>	12,143		
<i>Farming in Protected Landscapes Advice &amp; Guidance</i>	33,435		
<i>Farming in Protected Landscape Grants</i>	562,482		
Farming in Protected Landscapes (total) <sup>f</sup>	608,060	-636,799	-28,739
<i>Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (HPC S106)<sup>g</sup></i>	8,100		8,100
<i>Landscape Improvement Scheme (HPC S106)</i>	4,824		4,824

Notes:

- Some expenditure from the FIPL budget will go through in April. Eligible work undertaken in March by FIPL can be claimed / invoices in April and allocated to the previous financial year.
- The income from the HPC S106 / DCO funding will be transferred in late April.

Table F5: Quantock Hills National Landscape Team – Project Budget 2024/25 outrun

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Capital Access Grant	22,481	-27,854	-5,372
Monument Management Scheme	4,146	-4,800	-654
SHBBS	14,600	0	14,600
LMSS	917	-15,100	-14,183
Nature Recover	935		935
Village Signs	7,638		7,638

Branded materials	4,373		4,373
Project grant (Defra)	0	-25,422	-25,422
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,090</b>	<b>-73,176</b>	<b>-18,086</b>

Notes:

- h) Main underspend associated with delay in delivery of Land Management Skills Scheme which will require underspend to be carried forward into 2025/26 financial year.

Table F6: Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme – Budget 2024/25 outrun

<b>Expenditure<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>£</b>		<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Salary, NI, SA	195,803		NLHF	-495,981
Contractors	347,959		FotQ	-20,000
Equipment	10,969		Event Income	-1,225
Office Costs	11,229			
Partnership running cost	9,577			
Travel, transport	6,498			
Training	1,265			
Grants	31,224			
<b>Total</b>	<b>614,524</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>-517,206</b>

Notes:

- i) QLPS budgets align with National Lottery Heritage Fund financial reporting requirements and individual line items may not correspond depending upon the ledger code used when raising purchase orders.

Table F7: Quantock Hills National Landscape Team – Land Management Budget 2024/25 outrun

<b>Land Management</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Cothelstone Hill	8,059	-7,234	825
New Stowey Farm <sup>i</sup>	35,226	-12,800	22,426
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,285</b>	<b>-20,034</b>	<b>23,251</b>

Notes:

- j) Significant apparent overspend associated with New Stowey Farm due to significant capital works required to be able to undertake desired management. Income associated with New Stowey Farm (Sustainable Farming Initiative and HPC S106) due in 2025/26 financial year to cover capital work costs.