

2015 / 16 Business Plan

Supported by:



2015/16 Business Plan – Setting the Priorities

1. Priority Setting:

- a. In November 2010 the Quantock Hills AONB JAC went through a priority setting exercise. This was in response to known reduction in funding from core partners. At the time of the priority setting exercise the level of reduction was unknown but scenarios were run of 5% reduction (best case) to 30% reduction (worst case). [Appendix 1](#) shows the results and will inform the direction of work of the AONB Service.

2. Management Plan

- a. The 2014-2019 Management Plan was adopted and published on 1st April 2014. Appendix 1 of the Management Plan lists 72 actions to be undertaken by the AONB Service and partners which will lead to the successful delivery of the Plan. The Action Plan (Sc 6) is further developed from the list of actions to produce the annual work programme, based on a number of factors, such as available resource, funding opportunities and partner / stakeholder resource.

3. Other drivers:

- a. The AONB Service is expecting significant reductions in its contributions from some core funders. 2015/16 is an interim year between Comprehensive Spending Review periods and national and local government are uncertain over their long-term funding of all services. Defra have set its expected funding of AONBs with an annual 5.38% reduction of the 2010/11 grant amount, in line with the previous 4 years. Local authorities are also experiencing continued reductions to their budgets and this is likely to impact on contributions to the AONB. The reduction in funding requires the AONB Service to investigate a different business or operations model. This work began in 2011/12 with the setting up of a working group of the Quantock Hills JAC, the Future Directions Working Group. The group has created an adaptation plan which will investigate a mix of 'belt-tightening', income generation and operational changes to ensure a sustainable partnership continues into the future. It is suggested that the adaptation plan is revisited and refreshed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.
- b. Defra strategic priorities. In June 2013 Defra informed AONB Partnership of their priority areas of work for the coming years. The highest priority was and still is growing the rural economy, with further priorities of improving the environment, safeguarding animal health and safeguarding plant health. There is a challenge for AONBs to show Defra how they meet these priorities as well as demonstrating the evidence base of the impact of further funding cuts from central government.
- c. AONBs have been identified as key delivery bodies in the implementation of Biodiversity 2020, the English strategy for wildlife and ecosystem services, by the Terrestrial Biodiversity Group (TBG). The Quantock Hills AONB partnership has a long track record of biodiversity delivery and has embedded the principals of Biodiversity 2020 into its revised Management Plan.

4. Delivery Mechanisms

- a. Due to the reduction in core funding the AONB Service will base the 2015/16 Business Plan on the existing AONB team model. There may be amendments in post roles to ensure most effective use of skill-sets and to ensure the AONB realise funding / income opportunities.
- b. Longer term the delivery mechanism will be informed by the Funding Agreement (post March 2015) which will set out the indicative funding for the next 3-years.
- c. Additional project staff are identified in Table 3 under the action plan.

Table 1 AONB team structure 2015/16.

Existing AONB Team	FTE	Function
AONB Manager	1	Day to day management of the team, developing AONB policy, commenting on behalf of JAC on statutory consultations and ensuring good working practices with all partnerships. Lead on Management Plan review and Future Directions.
Development Officer	1	Develops and delivers the action plan through the AONB team, external contractors and organisations. Seeks external funding opportunities to implement projects which deliver the statutory AONB Management Plan. Develops income streams which will support the funding of the AONB Partnership and Service.
Landscape Planning Officer	0.4	This post develops comments and guidance on planning and links with the local planning authorities to ensure that any development is sensitive to the needs of the AONB landscape.
Ranger	1	Key role is recreation and access, heritage and land management. Also undertakes project development and delivery, especially working with local communities.
Partnership Ranger (shared)	0.4	Key role includes events and recreation management and delivery. Also undertakes delivery on SWHT amenity land and visitor management
Volunteer Coordinator (shared)	0.6	To develop volunteering opportunities, including enhancement of the existing joint Quantock volunteer group.
Communication Officer	0.4	Role includes producing all literature, digital media, managing the AONB website and dealing with media enquiries
Support Officer	0.6	Role includes administration, finance, secretariat to working groups
Total FTE	5.4	

5. Quantock Hills budget 2015/16

- a. Table 2 shows the summary budget for 2015/16 based on indicative contribution figures supplied by the AONB partners at the November Officers Working Group. The funding will not be confirmed until February 2015 by local authority funding partners. Defra have indicated their 2015/16 grant at £142,505, subject to a successful grant application. A full budget can be found in Appendix 3.
- b. Project development will look to attract external funding for projects identified in the Action Plan (section 6). Further work will be undertaken to develop an alternative delivery model for the AONB Partnership and Team to reduce reliance on exchequer funding.
- c. As a condition of the Statement of Intent (a requirement of the Defra grant) the AONB Service is required to hold an earmarked reserve which is to be used in the event of redundancies. This removes further financial liability from the partners. This is shown as a separate budget line and is not available as discretionary funds. The reserve has come from non-exchequer sources and was secured by postponing a number of projects in 2011/12. It is updated annually based on cost of whole team redundancy (compulsory).
- d. The budget will deliver the Action Plan (Section 6) which will work to the priorities identified in Section 1 in delivery of the Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19. To this extent continued funding has been identified for a Volunteer Coordinator post and volunteer activities.
- e. The budget shows income against Cost Recovery. This is primarily recharge for services or management fees where the AONB Service is hosting joint projects. The cost recovery elements are for land management activity such as swaling which the AONB Service undertakes on Quantock Common SSSI. For 2015/16 the AONB Service will operate a cost recovery system, though not necessarily full-cost, for any scheme where it is asked to undertake swaling. There is also recharge against the Amenity Land budget for management of Cothelstone Hill, Lydeard Hill car park and Triscombe car park on behalf of SWHT and SCC.
- f. The Mendip Hills AONB recharge is for the Volunteer Coordinator post. This is a joint post with Quantock and Mendip Hills AONB. Quantock Hills will retain budget and line management with day to day supervision undertaken by the local AONB officer. The Forestry Commission recharge is for the Partnership Ranger post, employed by the AONB Service and managed jointly with the Forestry Commission.

Table 2: Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget 2015 – 16 (summary) – **TO BE CONFIRMED APRIL 2015**

Core Expenditure	2014 15	2015 16	Notes		INCOME	2014 15	2015 16	Notes
Salaries, NI, SA	196,101	196,876			Defra	153,133	153,133	2
Accommodation	23,840	23,840			SCC	21,500	21,500	2
Training, Travel, vehicles costs	18,666	19,470			TDBC	10,000	10,000	2
Partnership Running Costs	9,700	19,842	1		SDC	11,500	11,500	2
Partnership Budget	800	1,100			WSC	9,957	5,000	2
Core Expenditure	249,107	261,128			Cost recovery income	4,000	5,300	3
					Mendip Hills AONB	9,720	9,360	4
Project Expenditure					FC Contribution	13,000	17,868	4
HPC Landscape Projects	0	371,517			Misc (inc events)	1,300	300	
Natural Beauty, Natural Wellbeing	0	19,720			Core Income	234,110	233,961	
Cothelstone Hill Heritage Project	0	8,160						
Invasive species control	0	0			Ext Project Income	0	411,717	
Dowsborough Hill Heritage Project	0	0			RIA Brought Forward	61,224	53,892	
Land Management & Skills	0	12,000						
Access	1,000	1,000			SUMMARY			
					TOTAL INCOME	295,334	699,570	
Project Expenditure	1,000	412,397			<i>EARMARKED RESERVE</i>	<i>26,504</i>	<i>26,045</i>	5
					DISPOSABLE INCOME	268,830	673,525	
Amenity Land Expenditure			6		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	250,108	673,525	
Contractors, equipment & Materials	15,500	5,125			Surplus / Deficit	18,722	0	
Fees, hired, materials	16,000	1,000						

NOTES:

- 1 – Increase to take account of visitor survey.
- 2 – As advised by each partner in December 2015
- 3 – Cost recovery from HPC Sc106 project delivery and land management recharges.
- 4 – Recharge to Mendip Hills AONB and Forestry Commission for Volunteer Coordinator and Partnership Ranger shared posts.
- 5 – Earmarked reserves – Separate budget which is set aside to cover cost of whole team redundancy. Budget is reviewed annually.
- 6 – Amenity Land is a ring-fenced budget managed by the AONB Service for management of Cothelstone Hill and other amenity land holdings. It is shown here for illustrative purposes only.

6. Action Plan 2015/16

- a. The Action Plan below identifies delivery against Defra core duties of an AONB Unit ([Appendix 5](#)), Management Plan Action Point Delivery and Core Duties delivery, such as line management. Against the delivery is an assessment of AONB resources required by post and number of days. With some delivery there will be more than one post associated with delivery, but the first post listed will be the lead on that item of work. Table 3 Identifies the main project areas of work the AONB Service will be undertaking during 2015/16. Table 4 is the full action plan.

Table 3: Main Project areas of work: (*italics – projects not confirmed*)

Project	Brief Description	Lead	Indicative cash project cost
HPC Landscape Project EDF Funded.	<p>Delivery of 2 schemes with funding from the Sc106 agreement associated with Hinkley Point C.</p> <p>Scheme 1: Grant funding for small project that improve landscape features or biodiversity open to landowners, farmers, community groups and individuals.</p> <p>Scheme 2: Landscape scale restoration project to improve habitat linkages between the north and south commons of the Quantock Hills through the creation of corridors and stepping stones.</p> <p>See appendix 6 for full details.</p> <p>The project will be delivered by a 0.6 FTE project officer.</p>	DO	£371,517
Natural Beauty, Natural Wellbeing Health and Wellbeing Funded	<p>A 3 year project to develop a suite of activities that will encourage health care professionals to explore the AONBs of Somerset. Project aims to increase participation and engagement to achieve health and wellbeing objectives, such as reducing obesity or improving happiness. Project budget £60,000 over 3-years, project hosted by Quantock Hills AONB.</p> <p>The project will be delivered by a 0.6FTE project officer.</p>	AM	£20,000
Cothelstone Hill Heritage Project Partnership funded	<p>The project will undertake archaeological investigation at Cothelstone Hill in partnership with Bridgwater College and local schools. The aim is to increase knowledge of the archaeological features of Cothelstone Hill, engage local young people in the research and management of the site and to increase understanding for the general public by increased interpretation and a series of events.</p>	DO	£8,160

Invasive Species Control Natural England Funded	Year 3 of a 5-year project to control invasive species of plants, such as rhododendron, to control the spread of plant diseases, such as Phytophthora ramorum.	DO	£10,000 (indicative)
<i>Dowsborough Hill Heritage Project</i> English Heritage Funded	<i>As part of the agreed Dowsborough Hillfort and Dead Woman's Ditch Management Plan funding will be sought to undertake further restoration work to Dowsborough Hill Fort. Works will be undertaken in partnership with the SWHT, QCA, NE and EH. Works will include reducing erosion by path diversion, improving drainage over the monument and path consolidation.</i>	R	£20,000
Land Management & Skills EDF Funded	Delivery of the Land Management & Skills schedule of work under the Section 106 Agreement with Hinkley Point C. The AONB Service will deliver 2 elements of the project: 1) Orchards. The enhancement of orchards through the running of workshops open to landowners and managers. Aim will be to increase knowledge of appropriate management which will improve the condition of traditional orchards in the project area. 2) Habitat & Species Monitoring. The setting up and establishment of a citizen science type initiative to increase the monitoring of key AONB habitats and species.	DO	£12,000
Access	A project to deliver the enhancement of AONB promoted routes such as the Greenway or AONB circular walks.	PR	£1,000

Key:

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

Table 4 Quantock Hills AONB Service 2015/16 Action Plan

MP Act	Ref	Defra duty	Action	Milestone / Target	AONB Lead / support	Partners
LANDSCAPE QUALITY						
		G	Develop funding bids to support delivery of Quantock Hills Management Plan 2014-19.	Stage 1 bid complete and submitted	DO / AM	NE, NT, others
		F	Undertake fixed point photography monitoring on 12 sites to provide a visual record of landscape and change over time including views into and from the AONB	Take photographs from 12 sites during 2015.	DO / VC	
LAND MANAGEMENT: FARMING & FORESTRY						
W1/2		C	Deliver a Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES) to undertake works which will prevent or control Phytophthora diseases as a measure to stop the spread of the disease to the lowland heath habitats throughout the Quantock Hills AONB	30Ha of control or follow up work undertaken on invasive species as agreed by Natural England	DO	Natural England
		C	Delivery of HPC Landscape Schemes	As table 3	DO / LP	
LM2/1		C	Promote Countryside Stewardship to AONB landowners / farmers to encourage take up	Support NE with delivery of Countryside Stewardship through discussion and possible workshop / newsletters / other promotion.	AM	FWAGSW
LM4/1		C F	Host a SAC woodland management meeting to promote management activity by landowners, NE and others	Meeting held Sept 2015. Agreed action plan April 2016.	AM	Landowners, NE, FE, QCA
		C	Manage on behalf of SWHT amenity land sites including animal welfare checks, income generation (HLS)	Delivery of agreed HLS programme, including claiming HLS	R / PR / VC / DO	Volunteers
LM1/1		C	Undertake swaling programme agreed by QCMG for enhancement of Quantock Common SSSI	Agreed swaling programme completed. Income generation required for AONB Service to undertaken action	PR / R / VC	Volunteers
BIODIVERSITY: WILDLIFE & HABITATS						
W1/3		C F	Support continued monitoring of important species to inform future management plans for Quantock Common and surrounding agricultural land	Adder population and hibernacula survey carried out on 2 sites Bat transects undertaken at 2 sites Butterfly transects undertaken at 2 sites Dormouse Monitoring at 2 site	DO / R / PR / VC	SRAG (lead), Reaseheath College, SBG, Volunteers

W1/3		C F	Support monitoring of Pied Flycatchers on Quantock Hills and feed into regional project on effects of climate change on indicator species	Monitoring of 150 boxes in key locations throughout AONB	PR	Exeter University (lead), BTO, NE, Volunteers
W1/3		C F	Publish and promote results of monitoring of important species	Monitoring report produced and presented to partnership	DO / VC	SRAG / RSPB / SBG
W4/1		C	Engage with FC Forest Design Plans for Quantock woods	Comments considered and FDP published June 2015	LP / DO	FE
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL INFLUENCES						
H2/1			Undertake annual condition monitoring of scheduled monuments in the AONB	All Scheduled Monuments surveyed twice.	VC	Volunteers / EH
H3/1			Publish and promote results of monitoring of heritage assets.	Pdf summary of baseline survey available Dec 2015.	CO / VC	EH
H1/2			Cothelstone Hill Heritage Project (see table 3)	Table 3	DO / R / VC	SWHT / EH / NE
H1/2			Dowsborough Hillfort Restoration Project (see table 3)	Table 3	R / DO	SWHT / EH / NE
GEOLOGY & COAST						
DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE						
DI2/1		K	Engage with local authority planning departments to share good practice.	Present at local authority planning committee meetings	AM / LA	
DI2/1		K	Monitor planning applications in and around the AONB and identify any potential damaging developments. Comment on potentially damaging applications on behalf of the JAC	Planning Database up to date and reporting back against database possible through GIS. Comments sent to relevant planning authorities	LP / SA	
DI2/2		K	Engage with Local Development Framework (LDF) consultations	Relevant LDF consultation responses sent	LP	
		E J	Make AONB planning comments available on the website (or synopsis with link) to ensure partners and communities can see AONB response to planning application	All planning comments to be uploaded to AONB Service website quarterly	SA	
H2/2		F J	Undertake research into Quantock hedgerow and linear features to better understand their importance in terms of landscape,	Seek funding for implementation of project plan.	DO / VC	
VISITORS, ACCESS & THE LOCAL ECONOMY						
VRA4 /1		B	Monitor non-AONB event use of the Quantock Hills AONB to provide evidence of use and provide guidance to event organisers to minimise	Assess all event forms received and provide comment / guidance where necessary	PR	

			impact of events on the AONB	Review event notification procedure to ensure fit for purpose		
VRA3 /1		B	Encourage use of off-hilltop promoted routes through development of innovative engagement tools, such as digital personal interpretation.	Funding secured to develop interpretation for off-hilltop promoted routes	PR / DO	
VRA2 /2		F	Collect bi-annual data from 6 visitor counters installed through the Quantock Hills and disseminate information to partners	Information collected, processed and disseminated. Information in format to be used as evidence in funding bids	DO / VC	Volunteers
VRA4 /1		B	Engage with event organisers to ensure notification of events occurring on the hills. Offer advice to ensure minimal adverse impact from events to the landscape, tranquillity and natural environment of the Quantock Hills	Event monitoring information available to landowners / interested people	PR / SA	
VRA5 /1		B	Ensure on the ground presence during busy periods to engage visitors and provide information.	24 days patrol throughout year, with volunteer involvement	R / PR	Volunteers
VRA4 /1		C	Limit vehicle damage to hilltop tracks through engagement with user groups.	Access agreement in place with main user groups	AM / R	
VRA3 /1		I	Carry out site and promoted route audits and carry out safety works	Annual audit completed.	R / PR	Volunteers
VRA2 /2		B J	Undertake quantitative visitor survey which will aim to provide estimate of visitor numbers, types, economic input and is comparable to existing visitor surveys	Survey undertaken – end of Dec 2015. Report complete end of Mar 2016.	DO / VC	Volunteers
COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEERING						
			Delivery of Natural Beauty, Natural Wellbeing project (partnership project)	See Table 3	AM / VC / R / DO	MHAONB / BHAONB
			Delivery of the Land Management & Skills (Orchards & monitoring) Schemes	See Table 3	DO / VC	WSC
CV2/ 1		J	VOLUNTEERS – Continued engagement with Quantock Countryside Volunteers ensuring tasks occurring through AONB area.	3,000 volunteer hours completed.	VC / R, PR	
L3/1		J	VOLUNTEERS - Volunteer involvement in local events and other visitor management to raise AONB profile and provide information.	30 volunteer work days spent at local events or engaged in visitor management activity	VC / R	
H2/1		J	VOLUNTEERS – Volunteer involvement in Scheduled Monument Monitoring Scheme.	2 field surveys of 95% of SM undertaken, report collated and disseminated.	VC	English Heritage
W1/3		J F	VOLUNTEERS – Volunteer involvement in wildlife & heritage asset monitoring throughout the AONB	2 bird surveys 2 bat transect monitored 2 butterfly transects monitored	VC / DO / R	National Trust, EH, BCT, SBG

				1 site monitored for dormice All SM monitored twice		
CV1/ 2		J	Encourage and practically support community initiatives such as parish plans in and around the AONB to help local communities protect the character of their locality and ensure local distinctiveness is integral to the local community	Development of Parish Plans or other relevant initiatives supported by AONB Service	R	
		C J	Provide secretariat and support for Quantock Commons Management Group (QCMG), Quantock Police & Conservation Agencies Working Group (QPCAWG) and Coleridge Way Steering Group (CWSG)	2 meetings of each group. Meeting notes and progress on actions recorded	SA / DO / R / CO PR	
		C J	Provide on the ground support to the Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group (QDMCG) deer count	Deer Count undertaken and results fed back to QDMCG and JAC	R / SA / PR	
UNDERSTANDING						
L3/1		B	Provide 11 events open to the public, including specialist walks and events aimed at families.	300 people attending AONB events	CO / SA/ R/ PR/ DO/ VC	Other leaders (11)
E1/3		B	Distribute AONB Visitor Guide through the LIPs distribution points	Restocking of LIPs distribution points x 4	CO	
L3/1		B	AONB Service attendance at 3 local shows / events to promote the AONB Service and provide information to local communities	3 x local shows attended – 1 in each district.	SA / CO / VC / DO / PR/ R / LP	Volunteers
E1/1		B	Publish and distribute e-newsletter. Hardcopy can be printed off for distribution through schools	At least 4 newsletters produced with distribution to 1,100 individuals	CO / SA	
E1/1		B	Regularly update the website and social media to include blogs, news items, planning comments etc	New content to be added on at least a weekly basis	CO	
		B	Support education visits by local schools to increase awareness of special qualities of the AONB.	Support with staff / volunteer time 5 school visits	R	Volunteers
		B	Review of AONB website to ensure portal inclusion and increase flexibility of the website into the future.	Action plan developed to achieve outcome of review of website.	CO / AM	
E1/2		B	Review and update 10 interpretation panels to provide on-site information to visitors to enhance experience.	10 interpretation panels updated and installed.	PR / CO	
E1/1		B	Produce media content (press release direct media contact) to include standard messages (lambing, ticks etc) as well as specific project successes	6 press releases sent out with 50% picked up by local media	CO	

		E	Produce and distribute a annual report to show progress against AONB Management Plan Targets	Annual Report produced and distributed by end of June 2012	AM / CO	
LM1/4		C	Year 2 of Make Small Things Count Project. Host 3 'roadshows' at AONB events to promote the project	3 roadshows held with 45 attendees	R / VC	Plantlife (lead)
CORE DUTIES / PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT						
		E I	OWG and JAC reports produced. These reports will provide monitoring against the action plan targets	4 OWG reports and 4 JAC reports produced.	AM / DO / R / LP	
		D G	Develop new business opportunities through joint working with relevant groups / organisations. Include development of non-exchequer income generation.	Partnership approval for adoption of income streams.	DO / AM	
		D	Write /DEFRA AONB bid with input from OWG and JAC partnership.	DEFRA bid accepted	AM / DO	
		I	Host 4 OWG and JAC meetings – April, July, November and February 2014 to allow informed and engaged ownership of partnership by JAC.	4 OWG meetings held. 4 JAC meeting held	AM / SA / DO / R / PR / LP	
		I	Regular meetings of AONB Service team to review AONB Management activities and issues	45 meetings held.	All team 6 days each	
		H	Membership and involvement in the NAAONB to ensure national and regional liaison and to ensure that the NAAONB represents the views of the Quantock Hills partnership	Attendance at Lead Officers meetings and other meetings where applicable	AM / DO / LP	
			Annual risk assessment reviews, instigate new H&S procedures in line with good practice.		AM	
			Undertake finance monitoring and provide reports in various formats to partners, hosts and grant giving organisations		AM / DO	
			Undertake a range of support activities such as answering enquiries, filing, procurement etc		SA	
			1-1 management meetings, annual PRaD meetings staff management		AM / DO	

Action included. Funding not secured.

Appendix 1: Priority Setting Work –

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

Table A1.1 Priority work for the AONB Service:

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

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

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

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

Appendix 2: Management Plan Consultation – Priority areas of work.

Stage 1 Public Consultation, summer 2013.

Key priorities identified include:

Landscape

- Protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat over the Quantock landscape
- Look after cultural, historic or archaeologically important features
- Support sensitive local farming
- Encourage positive management of woodlands
- Monitor and support natural healthy ecosystems (water, air, soil, food etc.)

Communities, Economy, Enjoyment

- Support sustainable tourism and recreation
- Support the local economy and encourage local business
- Support good maintenance and enhancement of footpaths, bridleways and promoted routes
- Reduce the negative effects of inappropriate vehicle use
- Conserve and improve local distinctiveness and character

Top objectives

- To protect and enhance the landscape and character of the AONB
- To develop the role of community groups and volunteers in the management of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- To protect the wild character, wildlife sites and species, cultural landscape and architectural heritage of the AONB
- To maintain practical AONB staff on the ground to manage Rights of Way misuse and reduce access problems such as sheep worrying and summer fires
- To maintain and enhance the biodiversity and ecological health of the Quantocks with particular focus on the Strategic Nature Areas of Upland Oakwood and Heathland

Stage 1 Stakeholder Consultation, summer 2013 [Green = top 5 priorities / Red = bottom 5 priorities]

Ref	Objective	Score
L1	To protect and enhance the landscape and character of the AONB	60
F1	To protect and enhance the wildlife, landscape and character of Quantock farmland	46
F2	To conserve and promote proper management of Quantock hedges and associated banks	40
FW1	To further develop the sensitive management of woodland and plantations to protect, enhance and extend the distinctive character, landscape and wildlife of the Quantocks	51
FW2	To maintain or enlarge current levels of native woodland cover and protect	47

	areas of semi-natural woodland in the AONB	
W1	To maintain and enhance the biodiversity and ecological health of the Quantocks with particular focus on the Strategic Nature Areas of Upland Oakwood and Heathland	52
W2	To support development of agri-environment schemes and site management plans in or bordering the AONB	35
W3	To limit the encroachment of invasive species across the AONB	45
H1	Contribute to the protection, conservation, recording and enhancement of historic and culturally significant Quantock landscapes and archaeological features	49
GC1	Maintain example exposures of Quantock geology where they do not significantly mar the landscape, and to explore the potential of disused quarries	24
GC2	To protect the high quality of Quantock coastal habitats and their distinctive landscape contribution	40
CE1	To prepare the AONB for the impacts and opportunities of climate change	24
CE2	To minimise the carbon footprint of the AONB Service and support a low carbon Quantock economy	19
CE3	To support the capacity of the AONB to deliver the services of a healthy functioning ecosystem including clean water and air, productive soil and healthy food, carbon management, flood risk mitigation, biodiversity, recreation opportunities and inspirational landscape	40
CE4	To further the understanding and protection of the water catchment role of the Quantock Hills	23
D1	To protect the wild character, wildlife sites and species, cultural landscape and architectural heritage of the AONB	54
D2	To ensure AONB involvement and influence in planning processes affecting the AONB	41
D3	To protect the views out from the AONB through involvement in the planning process	33
D4	To support the protection of local distinctiveness in the AONB settlements	31
V1	To widen and adapt access opportunities across the AONB to protect wildlife, benefit visitors and support businesses in local communities	45
V2	To monitor visitor trends and activities, including impacts on Special Areas of Conservation	36
A1	To ensure public access areas, Rights of Way and promoted routes are useable and maintained to a high Standard	42
A2	To reduce user conflict and limit damage to Rights of Way and landscape quality from recreational uses including off-road driving	44
A3	To maximise access opportunities for people of all ability levels	30
A4	To maintain practical AONB staff on the ground to manage Rights of Way misuse and reduce access problems such as sheep worrying and summer fires	53
T1	To lessen the negative sustainability and quality of life impacts of vehicular traffic in the AONB and protect locally distinctive Quantock roads and lanes	18
T2	To pursue the maintenance and sensitive repair of locally distinctive cast iron style road signs in and around the AONB	31
C1	To support sustainable village and rural projects which address AONB Management Plan related issues	29
C2	To support the local economy and sustainable marketing initiatives where these relate to AONB designation objectives	28
C3	To encourage the use of local facilities by local communities and visitors	19
C4	To develop the role of community groups and volunteers in the management of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	59
E1	To update and improve the quality and accessibility of Quantock information for AONB visitors, schools and local communities	37
E2	To further develop the educational and research resources of the AONB	22

Appendix 3: Quantock Hills AONB Service – detailed budget 2015 / 16

Expenditure	2014 15	2015 16	Comments
Salaries	153,328	158,874	
Additional Hours	6,033	6,126	
National Insurance	9,364	9,601	
Superannuation	27,377	22,275	
Staff Training	2,000	2,250	
Electricity	100	100	Based on previous years figures
NNDR - Rates	900	900	Based on previous years figures
Rents	10,700	10,700	
Water Charges	300	300	Based on previous years figures
Cleaning Charges	200	200	Based on previous years figures
Insurance - premises	40	40	Based on previous years figures
Car allowance	1,900	1,900	
Hired vehicle costs	0	0	
Travel costs	500	500	
Vehicle costs - Fuel	3,340	3,340	
Vehicle costs - Tyres	300	300	
Vehicle costs - Licence	50	50	
Vehicle costs - Insurance	990	1,130	
Vehicle costs - Maintenance	1,700	1,500	
Vehicle costs - Lease	7,786	8,400	
Equipment	4,180	5,010	
Equipment R&M	920	1000	
Literature & Pubs	0	0	
Publicity & Promotion	500	500	
Clothing & Uniform	200	200	
Research & Development	1,200	10,432	
Reprographics - photocopy/printing	300	600	
Stationary	1,500	1,500	
Postage	300	300	
Phone rental/Mobile Phones	1,100	1,100	
Subsistence	100	100	
Cost of Meetings (External)	700	700	
Subscriptions	2,500	2,500	
Insurance	450	450	

Management Fee to SCC	8,250	8,250	
Cross-Service charge	0	0	
TOTAL CORE	249,108	261,128	

Project Expenditure			
Various - see project sheet	1,000	412,397	
TOTAL	1,000	412,397	

INCOME

Defra	153,133	153,133	
SCC	21,500	21,500	
TDBC	10,000	10,000	
SDC	11,500	11,500	
WSC	9,957	5,000	
Cost Recovery	4,000	5,300	
Mendip Hills AONB	9,720	9,360	recharge for volunteer co-ord post
FC Contribution	13,000	17,868	recharge for Ptn Ranger post.
Events	1,300	300	
Core Income	234,110	233,961	

Ext Project Income			
Various - see project sheet	0	411,717	
TOTAL	0	411,717	

RIA Brought Forward	61,224	53,892	Est from 2014/15 budget overrun analysis (Dec14)

SUMMARY

TOTAL INCOME	295,334	699,570	
<i>EARMARKED RESERVES</i>	26,504	26,045	
DISPOSABLE INCOME	268,830	673,525	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	250,108	673,525	
Surplus / Deficit	18,722	0	

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

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

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

Appendix 6: Summary – schemes of work – HPC Sc106, landscape and visual delivery plan.

1. Introduction.

- a. The Quantock Hills AONB Service has been identified as a delivery agent for the Landscape and Visual Delivery Plan. The identified schemes of work are significant (in respect of the AONB Service) and require resource to deliver them, which has been identified under the Sc106 / DCO.
- b. The original Sc106 schemes of work were agreed by the HPC partners (April 2012) and JAC (July 2012) with funding to be released to SCC, via WSC, on phase 2 of the site preparation works. Since this time the development has received consent from the IPC and there is potential for the mitigation works under the main DCO to be combined with the Sc106 mitigation associated with the site preparation works.
- c. Somerset County Council has requested the AONB Service to submit scheme proposals, based on those originally agreed in July 2012. These proposals will be presented to the OWG and JAC in April prior to submission to SCC. This will allow the schemes to be started if/once the HPC development begins.

2. Landscapes & Visual Schedules.

- a. Under the Landscape & Visual Schedules of the Sc106 / DCO there are 5 funding strands, Landscape Improvement Scheme (LIS), Landscape Development Fund (LDF), Landscape Arts Project, Rural land based skills scheme and project officer revenue funding.
- b. The Quantock Hills AONB Service is identified as the delivery agent for the LIS and LDF. Initially under the Sc106 the project officer resource (£30,000 per year) was to deliver and manage these schemes and would go to the delivery organisation. However in the DCO the role of the project officer was widened to include on-site (main build and associated sites) landscape mitigation monitoring.

3. Proposals (draft)

- a. **Landscape Improvement Scheme.** A scheme to deliver area wide landscape improvements that provide habitat corridors to help all wildlife to adapt to climate change, corridor links between the woodlands on the north and south commons and heath reversion to link the heathland areas on the Quantocks.
 - i. Scheme budget: £400,000.
 - ii. Start date: Beginning of Phase 2 (unknown)
 - iii. Duration: 5-7 years from commencement of funding.
 - iv. Proposal: working with farmers and landowners, including organisations, aim to create corridors and 'stepping stones' to link woodland and heathland habitats between the northern Quantock Hills (Quantock Common SSSI and SAC) and the southern Quantock Hills.
 - v. Operation: potential areas for reversion / enhancement will be identified and agreed with landowners, NE, FC and other stakeholders prior to commencement of scheme. Part of the process will also develop solutions to on-going site maintenance post Sc106/DCO funding. These schemes will be refined at the beginning of the LIS. The QHAONB will employ a Landscape Project Officer to deliver the schemes on behalf of the landowners. It is envisaged that funding will provide habitat restoration / reversion works including soil / nutrient stripping, seed collection, planting,
 - vi. Area: All land within the Quantock Hills AONB boundary will be eligible BUT main project area as described in proposal.

- b. **Quantock Hills and Vale Landscape Development Fund.** A fund to support projects developed in conjunction with the Councils, which either restore or develop landscape features in the Quantock Hills and Vale, including hedge laying and planting, traditional standard orchard restoration, small woodland management, wild flower meadows, willow pollarding, dry stone wall restoration, planting native trees, pond restoration and a 'circular economic scheme'.
- i. Scheme Budget: £150,000
 - ii. Start date: Beginning of Phase 2 (unknown)
 - iii. Duration: 5-7 years.
 - iv. Proposal: To manage a discretionary fund that delivers the objectives as set out above. The fund will be open to landowners, farmers, organisations (such as community groups), parish councils, individuals and businesses.
 - v. Operation: To operate as the current Sustainable Development Fund. Those wishing to apply for a grant fill in an application form using the fund information sheet to provide guidance. The application is assessed by the project officer who ensures it meets the fund criteria and will make a recommendation. This recommendation is considered by a fund panel (current OWG with co-opted specialist members) that will decide whether to approval or reject the application. Approval of an application can be subject to additional conditions. The QHAONB would issue a grant acceptance. Once a project is complete the applicant will submit a claim form with evidence of expenditure and project outputs. The AONB Officer will check to ensure expenditure meets fund criteria and outputs have been achieved. If all requirements are met the claim is released for payment.
 - vi. Geographical range. The area is based on parishes within the Quantock Hills and Vale area where there is a visual impact of the proposed development upon that parish.
 - vii. Maximum Grant. The maximum grant will be £20,000.

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