

**HOWARDIAN HILLS  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
3 APRIL 2008**

**AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive details of the progress made with reviewing the AONB Management Plan since the last meeting of the JAC.

**2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE AND TIMETABLE**

- 2.1 The timetable for the revision of the Management Plan is included as Appendix 1. Work is progressing in-line with the timetable and no amendments to the schedule of tasks are needed at this time. It is however possible that an alternative mechanism for obtaining JAC approval for the Draft Plan in August/September may be necessary, as it is probable that there will be a 'time crunch' between preparing the draft Plan and sending it out for public consultation, as there was last time round.
- 2.2 The extended Core Funders Group meeting last November was particularly useful in scoping the amount of revision that partners saw as being necessary. The Group endorsed the 'light touch' approach, although there are some major new factors that need to be taken into account, such as climate change. One of the key tenets was how the Management Plan can 'add value' to existing strategies and initiatives, thereby making the AONB an exemplar in sustainable rural development.
- 2.3 The above approach will be used to guide the more in-depth discussions at the individual Topic Groups, which are planned for May – June. These will look at the existing Topic chapters and supporting technical information, with a view to using any new data that may be available. The impact of various factors, and what the Management Plan can do to manage those impacts, will form the basis of revised Objectives and Actions.
- 2.4 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) audit is progressing well. The SEA Officer at North Yorkshire County Council is currently preparing the Scoping Report, which is the first stage of the process. As part of that process, she is investigating sources and availability of data, in order to establish baseline SEA Indicators. This data will also be useful in guiding the revision of the Objectives contained in the Plan.
- 2.5 A series of Parish Planning events has been set up for May and June. Although these are not overtly designed to feed back into the Management Plan revision process, the format and techniques proposed will allow us to gauge what the community sees as being their main issues and priorities. As with the current Plan many of the issues are likely to be outside the direct remit of the JAC, but there is scope for us to assist and add value. At present we see the principal route for this being via the Parish Planning process, as run by

the Yorkshire Rural Community Council. This series of events will therefore have the dual function of encouraging communities to take action in their own villages, as well as allowing us to keep a finger on the pulse and assist as appropriate.

- 2.6 During the preparation of the current Management Plan, an event for farmers and land managers was held. The principal issues at that time were the low incomes being experienced in the agricultural sector and the various opportunities afforded by the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The agricultural climate is now quite different, with better returns in the arable sector (although still difficult times for livestock farmers), driven by increasing demands for food and biofuel raw materials. The key challenge for the next 5-year Management Plan period is likely to be how to reconcile these increasing demands with conservation and enhancement of the AONB landscape and coping with the perhaps increasing impacts of climate change. The views of AONB farmers and land managers will be crucial in formulating revised land management Objectives in the Management Plan.
- 2.7 The Core Funders Group meeting in November offered some useful advice on the format of the new Plan. The trend is now for more information to be put on computer CDs, thereby cutting down on the cost (and potential waste) of printed material. It is therefore envisaged that the new Plan will be slimmer than the current version, with the Supplementary Technical Information, Local Priority Sites, Action Plan and large map all being put onto a CD. The SEA documents can also be included on the same CD, thereby avoiding any costs for printing this additional piece of work. It is also likely that fewer copies will be printed – we still have approximately 350 copies left from the 750 print run of the current Plan – with all-CD copies being available as an alternative.
- 2.8 The cost of producing the map artwork for the new Plan is also likely to be reduced. Members will recall that Hambleton District Council completed this last time round, as an in-kind contribution towards the cost of producing the Plan. North Yorkshire County Council now has much of the information electronically in its Geographical Information System (GIS) and is also able to carry out additional ‘bespoke’ work to digitise our other information. This will be of great assistance and has saved approximately £2,500 in digitisation costs in this current year alone.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the timetable and process for AONB Management Plan revision, attached as Appendix 1, be approved.

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW TIMETABLE

October 2007	Provisional timetable approved by JAC
November 2007	Strategy and scoping for new Plan formulated by Core Funders Group
March 2008	Review of progress/future needs with AONB Partnership Group
April – June 2008	Topic Group meetings Informal public and stakeholder participation
June 2008 – August 2008	Preparation of Draft Plan
August 2008	Draft Plan approved at Extraordinary Meeting of JAC
October 2008	Formal public and stakeholder consultation
January 2009	Final Plan approved at Extraordinary Meeting of JAC
February – March 2009	Adoption of new Plan by constituent Local Authorities
April 2009	Deadline for Plan to be adopted by constituent Local Authorities and sent to Defra
April – July 2009	Printing and distribution of Plan