

**HOWARDIAN HILLS  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
30 OCTOBER 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, but several amendments have been made to the later part of the schedule now that some of the timescales and deadlines have become clearer.
- 2.2 A series of Parish Planning events was held in May and June. Although these were not overtly designed to feed back into the Management Plan revision process, the format and techniques that were used allowed us to gauge what the community saw as being their main issues and priorities. As with the current Plan some of the issues were outside the direct remit of the JAC, but there remains scope for us to assist and add value. The series of events therefore had 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.
- 2.3 Individual Topic Groups were held in May and June. These looked at the existing Topic chapters and supporting technical information, and discussed what issues and factors were likely to come into play over the next 5 years. This information was then used to develop revised Objectives and Actions, with the re-writing work being completed in August and September.
- 2.4 The draft chapters were sent to the Topic Groups and also JAC members, for initial comments. These comments were incorporated where appropriate. The revised Plan has now been fully compiled, proof-read, amended, proof-read again, etc and was sent to the printers on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
- 2.5 North Yorkshire County Council has provided invaluable assistance in preparing all the maps for the new Plan. It now has much of the information electronically in its Geographical Information System (GIS) and has also been able to carry out additional 'bespoke' work to digitise our other information. The seven A4 maps that are contained within the Plan have been revised and made ready for publication, as has the large A1 map that shows all the Local Priority Sites.

This large map has been produced as an electronic file that can simply then be printed as it is, without the need to carry out any further work to it. This has saved approximately £1,500 in external costs in the current year alone.

- 2.6 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) audit has also progressed well. The Scoping Report for the SEA was sent to the three statutory consultees (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) at the end of July. Minor comments were received and these were incorporated into the Environmental Report – the second stage of the process. The matrix of SEA Environmental Objectives has been completed, where the Management Plan Objectives are scored for potential impact on the environment. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been completed for the River Derwent SAC and nearby SACs/SPAs, in line with legislative requirements. Both these documents have been submitted to the printers, for putting onto the CDs that will form part of the Management Plan ‘pack’.
- 2.7 The draft Plan is due to be launched for public consultation in the week beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> November, with the format of the information sent out tailored to suit the various ‘groups’ of consultees. Paper copies of the full Plan will be sent to the JAC members, Local Authorities and Parish Councils. Organisations will receive copies of the CD, which will contain all the information and the large map. It is planned to send copies of the most relevant chapters (Agriculture and Development), together with the large map and list of Local Priority Sites, to all farmers and land managers in the AONB. It is felt that this will be a better way of making the information available, rather than sending the whole Plan as was done last time. All the information will also be posted on the AONB website, to give full access to people who want to view or download it.
- 2.8 A Farmers and Land Managers’ event has been arranged for the evening of Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November, at Hovingham Village Hall. Speakers will give presentations on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, Yorkshire Forward’s new Farm Resource Efficiency Programme grants and the latest position on the targeting of the Higher Level Stewardship grants. Patrick Stephenson, a well-known local agronomist and recent winner of a Farmers Weekly national award, will also be giving his view on what the next five years might bring for agriculture. Members of the JAC are welcome to attend.
- 2.9 The formal public consultation period closes on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December. The process for compiling and assessing the comments received, and then incorporating them into the final version of the Management Plan, is set out in Appendix 1. There will need to be a final sign-off of the Plan by the JAC before it is sent to the Local Authorities for adoption, and Members’ views are requested on how this might be handled.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- (a) The progress with the AONB Management Plan revision be noted;
- (b) Members agree a process for the final approval of the Management Plan by the JAC.

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 chapters circulated to JAC and Topic Groups for comments
November 2008	Formal public and stakeholder consultation
December 2008 & January 2009	Compilation and assessment of comments received from consultees
Early February 2009	Discussion of proposed amendments by Core Funders Group
Late February 2009	Approval of final Management Plan by JAC/Chairman?
March 2009	Adoption of new Plan by constituent Local Authorities
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009	Deadline for Plan to be adopted by constituent Local Authorities and sent to Defra
April – July 2009	Printing and distribution of Plan