

**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4 APRIL 2013**

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To receive details of the progress of the AONB Management Plan review and next steps.

2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1 The formal notification of the intention to review the Management Plan was sent to the constituent local authorities and relevant organisations, as required by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act, on 25th January.
- 2.2 Dates have been arranged for the 8 Topic Groups to discuss the relevant chapter issues, with 75 potential participants contacted. The meetings run from 25th April to 23rd May.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 If time permits, some initial work may be done on revising the text of the individual chapters before the Topic Group meetings are held. This is principally likely to involve moving more 'evidence' and 'discussion' to the existing Supplementary Technical Information document, which is likely to be re-named as The Evidence Base. This would allow the main Plan document to be much slimmer, hence reducing production costs. It would also more closely follow the format used by other AONBs at the previous review, of having a slim Plan consisting of the Objectives and an Action Plan, with Evidence contained in a separate document.
- 3.2 The Topic Group meetings will discuss the most recent evidence available for each subject, relevant new strategy documents from other organisations, threats and opportunities. Each section will then be revised to incorporate new evidence and policy, resulting in revised Objectives and new Actions for the 2014-2019 Plan period.
- 3.3 The revised chapters will be sent back to the Topic Group members, to ensure that their input has been accurately represented and that nothing has been missed. These revised chapters will also be circulated to JAC members. It is planned to do this by 12th July.
- 3.4 Following any further comments, the chapters and supporting information (Local Priority Sites section, Action Plan, etc) will be further revised and the document prepared for public and stakeholder consultation. At the same time the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment of the new Plan will be prepared/updated.
- 3.5 The formal consultation period is proposed as 1st October to 15th November. In previous years special consultation events have been held but their attendance has at times been disappointing. It is not currently the intention to hold any events for this review of the Plan, but if a demand and suitable mechanism emerges as the Plan review process proceeds, then events will be arranged. It is hoped that the slimmed-down and dis-aggregated Plan will be much easier for consultees to read, and hence comment on.

- 3.6 Following the end of the consultation period all the comments received will be compiled into a table, showing the comment and the amendments proposed to the Plan (if applicable). This table will be circulated to the JAC and Core Partners Group in January 2014, for their comments.
- 3.7 Following any comments received from this final consultation, the final revisions will be made to the Plan. These will be discussed with the JAC Chairman, who will provide the final sign-off of the revised Plan.
- 3.8 The Plan will then be sent to the three constituent Local Authorities in time for formal adoption by 31st March 2013, and to Defra.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the progress and next steps detailed above be noted for information.