

Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan

The statutory management plan for the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Ministerial Foreword

I am fortunate that England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are part of my Ministerial responsibilities. Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit.

This is a pivotal moment for all AONBs. The Government has set its ambition in the 25 Year Environment Plan which states clearly the importance of natural beauty as part of our green future, while AONBs retain the highest status of protection for landscape through national planning policy. Leaving the EU brings with it an opportunity to develop a better system for supporting our farmers and land managers, who play such a vital role as stewards of the landscape. And the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty led by Julian Glover - the first of its kind for generations - will make recommendations to make sure our designated landscapes can flourish in the years ahead.

In my visits to AONBs around the country, I have been struck by the passion of many people - farmers, volunteers, and hard-working staff - for the beautiful places they live and work. In this spirit I am delighted to welcome publication of this Statutory Management Plan for Cranborne Chase AONB. It is significant that this plan will be delivered in partnership by those who value Cranborne Chase AONB. I would like to thank all those involved in preparation of this document, and wish you the best of success in bringing it to fruition.

Chairman's Foreword

(Awaiting text)

Executive summary

This AONB Partnership Plan is the management plan required by Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It sets out the policies of the partner local authorities for this AONB. They are Wiltshire and Dorset Councils; Hampshire and Somerset County Councils; and New Forest, Mendip and South Somerset District Councils

Following consultation with local communities, public bodies and agencies with an interest in the area, the Plan presents the special qualities and features of the AONB and determines what actions are required to ensure their

conservation and enhancement. It explains the significance of this AONB and describes its outstanding landscapes, focussing on conserving and enhancing them, sustaining living and working landscapes, and the special landscapes to enjoy.

1. What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

- 1.1. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of the nation's finest landscapes. It is of high scenic quality that has statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of its landscape. Designation is under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The intent is to secure their permanent protection against any change or development that would damage their special qualities.
- 1.2. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 brought in new measures to help protect AONBs further and, through a Ministerial Statement that year, the Government confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent. The protection given to both types of area by the land use planning system should therefore be equivalent. There are currently 46 AONBs in the UK. In all, AONB designation covers approximately 18 per cent of the land area of the UK.
- 1.3. Designation of the Cranborne Chase AONB was in 1981 and extends over 981 square kilometres (Map 1). The AONB is the sixth largest and is one of thirteen AONBs in the South West (Map 2). The majority of the AONB lies within the South West though 6.8% of the AONB (the Hampshire section) falls within the South East. In the South West, together with the two National Parks (Exmoor and Dartmoor), the family of protected areas cover some 38% of the countryside.

Primary purpose of designation

- 1.4. The primary purpose of AONB designation is 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'¹.
- 1.5. In 1991, the Countryside Commission stated 'In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of economic and social development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.
- 1.6. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.'²

¹ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: Section 82

² Countryside Commission Policy Statement on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 1991

What is natural beauty?

- 1.7. The primary purpose of AONB designation is rooted in 'natural beauty'. The term was enshrined in the 1949 Act when a romantic idea of scenic value prevailed. Over the years, qualification and amendment to the legislation has made it clear that natural beauty includes considerations such as wildlife, geological features and cultural heritage³. There is a useful definition in government guidance to AONB partnerships. "Natural Beauty" is not just the look of the landscape, but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries⁴. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 clarified that land is not prevented from being treated as of natural beauty by the fact that it is used for agriculture, or woodlands, or as a park, or that its physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape⁵.
- 1.8. This AONB is a cultural, living landscape by virtue of both the species and habitats within it but also due to its special qualities that human activity maintains. The natural beauty of the AONB is a blend of both the rich natural, historic and cultural heritage. The AONB Partnership believes that the presence of the expansive, open downlands, the many historic and literary associations, high levels of tranquillity, and the vast dark night skies comprise important elements of the natural beauty of the AONB. Those who manage the land are central to the future of this landscape. It is inevitable that this cultural landscape will continue to evolve but this needs to be in ways that conserve and enhance its special qualities.

International context

IUCN Protected Landscape

- 1.9. The AONB landscape is also of international importance. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognise it as a Category V Protected Landscape by (*Appendix 1*). In 2013, the IUCN UK Committee reaffirmed the Category V status of all AONBs, confirming the significant contribution they make to conserve the UK's biodiversity.

European Landscape Convention

- 1.10. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is a Treaty devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe (*Appendix 2*). Crucially, the Convention encourages the integration of landscape matters into all relevant areas of national and local policy, including cultural, economic and social policies. The ELC defines landscape as "An area,

³ A draft statement on natural beauty, The University of Sheffield, January 2006

⁴ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A guide for AONB Partnership members, Countryside Commission, CA24, November 2001, p.6.

⁵ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006: Section 99

as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.” (Council of Europe 2000)

- 1.11. There is a particular emphasis on the need for co-operation in undertaking programmes of landscape work that cross administrative and national boundaries. This AONB is in a prime position to showcase the UK's commitment to the Convention.

2. What makes this particular area special?

Statement of Significance

- 2.1. Forming part of the extensive belt of chalkland that stretches across southern central England, the Cranborne Chase AONB⁶ is a landscape of national significance. Its special qualities flow from the historical interaction of humans and the land. They include its diversity, distinctiveness, sense of history and remoteness, dark night skies, tranquillity; and its overwhelmingly rural character. With mists slowly forming over expansive downlands, it can be a moody, evocative landscape. The sights and sounds of bygone times never far away. It is an unspoilt and aesthetically pleasing landscape.
- 2.2. Natural beauty is not just the visual appearance of the countryside. It includes the flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features; and the historic and cultural associations and our sensory perceptions of them. The combinations of these factors give each locality its own sense of place, contributing immensely to the quality of life.
- 2.3. The AONB designation embraces a collection of fine landscapes, each with its different landforms, soils and wildlife habitats. Whilst the chalk downland is a dominant feature, the escarpments, valleys, greensand terraces and clay vales reflect the geomorphology and impact of the underlying geology. Sometimes the changes between these landscapes are slow and gentle; in other cases, such as above and below escarpments, they are quite swift and obvious. Views across and along these landscapes can be wide and expansive whilst in the valleys they are more focussed and channelled. Unspoilt and panoramic views are characteristic of this AONB.
- 2.4. Hilltop earthworks, monuments, and tree clumps are features of the chalk downlands. They serve as landmarks to help orientate ourselves in these extensive landscapes. In historic terms, the landscapes of the AONB today are extraordinarily rich. Evidence of successive eras of human activity and settlements can often be lost: but not in this AONB. The landscapes offer up evidence of the imprint of man, carved out over the centuries; a continuous

⁶ Cranborne Chase AONB - shorter name. At the AONB Partnership Panel meeting of 9th January 2014, it was resolved that the shorter name 'Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)' would be used on a day to day basis from that date. The legal title 'Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)' remains in place and unaffected.

timeline throughout British history. Prehistoric monuments of national importance, historic borderlands, ancient field systems, droves and routeways all have stories to tell. The pioneering excavations and findings of General Pitt-Rivers, of the present day Rushmore Estate in Cranborne Chase, led to him being known as the 'father of modern archaeology'.

- 2.5. Eight thousand years ago, Neolithic peoples first started to change and manage this land. They built burial mounds and mysterious constructions, with many still seen today. The Bronze and Iron Ages saw the creation of large areas of pasture and arable farmland. The pastures on the downs date from this period. During the Anglo Saxon period, large landholdings began to change rural society. This was already a royal hunting area when the Normans invaded. They imposed forest law on the area then known as Cranborne Chase. However, agricultural expansion continued outside the Chase and by the fifteenth century, hedges and walls divided the land into large blocks. This trend continued as sheep production became very profitable and the wealthy built large houses with extensive parks. Forest law persisted in the Chase until 1829, leading to the retention of a high proportion of woodlands.
- 2.6. Since then, agriculture has changed rapidly but the settlement patterns are very similar to those that existed in the eighteenth century. There are more than 550 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, over 2,000 Listed Buildings and 17 Registered Parks and Gardens within the AONB.
- 2.7. The AONB is of great ecological importance. It has 5 internationally, and 60 nationally, protected sites. These range from ancient downland, chalk rivers and meadows to scattered semi-natural ancient woodland, which include remnants of the medieval Cranborne Chase royal hunting area and the former Royal Forests of Selwood and Gillingham. There are also around 520 sites of local importance for wildlife comprising just over 9% of the AONB.
- 2.8. Large, rectangular fields emphasise the open character of the chalk downs. The chalkland valley bottoms of the Rivers Wylye and Ebble are mainly in permanent pasture, with many copses and hedgerows, whilst the ridges and valley sides are predominantly arable. In the northwest, the sandstone fringe of wooded ridges and valleys includes rich parklands such as Longleat and Stourhead. Agriculture, and its associated businesses, is still a significant employer together with commercial forestry and limited mineral extraction. In fact the paucity of mineral extraction is a feature of this AONB.
- 2.9. The lush, wooded clay Vale of Wardour, harbouring the River Nadder, forms a broad wedge through the centre of the AONB, separating two large and distinct areas of largely arable chalk downland. To the south, there is the unusually wooded downland of Cranborne Chase itself, with its steeply cut coombes and dry valleys so typical of chalk landscapes. To the north, the West Wiltshire Downs are generally more elevated, rising up to Grovely Wood on the eastern ridge and from where, on a clear day, the huge chalkland plateau that is Salisbury Plain can be seen stretching northwards in the distance.
- 2.10. The Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2003) draws together the features and attributes that contribute to the distinctive and outstanding

character of the AONB. It explores the physical, ecological, visual, historic and cultural forces that shape the present day dynamic, working landscape, encompassing its social, economic and recreational characteristics. It identifies eight Landscape Types, each with distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover, and historical evolution. Four cover the chalk landscapes, two the greensand areas, and one each the clay vale and the hills between the chalk and the heathland outside the AONB. The individual characteristics of the fifteen geographical Landscape Character Areas are set out in the LCA.

- 2.11. The Heritage Lottery funded (HLF) Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership scheme has supported a more detailed LCA (2018) of this part of the AONB. It has fourteen Local Landscape Character Areas, which nest within the broader character areas of the earlier assessment.
- 2.12. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (2008) describes and maps the historic and archaeological dimensions of the present day AONB landscape. Together with the Historic Environment Action Plans (2011), these two documents are a huge educational and management resource, charting the ever changing, living landscapes and the lives of those who made, and make, this their home; in essence a 'living library' and 'countryside encyclopaedia'.
- 2.13. Both local communities and visitors hold the immense cultural, historic and ecological riches in high esteem. The many diverse cultural associations include inspirational artists, writers, sculptors, poets, photographers and musicians. To name but a few, Heywood Sumner, Thomas Hardy, Desmond Hawkins, Cecil Beaton, Lucien Freud and Elisabeth Frink all took inspiration from Cranborne Chase and its hinterland. Cultural associations offer a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of these evocative landscapes.
- 2.14. These aesthetic assets, together with panoramic views, dark skies awash with stars, the wealth of wildlife, plethora of historic sites, ancient droves and route ways, all offer opportunities for exploration, relaxation, walking and cycling. Residents and visitors alike turn to the landscapes and scenic beauty of the AONB to refresh the spirit as well as enhancing health and well-being. As sustainable rural tourism evolves, it offers growing support to this deeply rural economy.
- 2.15. This AONB is a deeply rural area with widely scattered hamlets, villages and narrow roads. This mainly agricultural landscape is sparsely populated, tranquil, and has no large settlements within its boundaries. Nearby market towns such as Salisbury, Shaftesbury, Blandford, Fordingbridge, Wimborne and Warminster are growth areas.

The setting of the AONB

- 2.16. The setting of an AONB is the surroundings in which the influence of the area is experienced. If the quality of the setting declines, then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes. The construction of high or expansive structures, or a change generating movement, noise, odour, vibration or dust

over a wide area, will affect the setting. As our appreciation of the relationships between neighbouring landscapes grows, so our understanding of what constitutes the setting continues to evolve.

- 2.17. Views are one element of setting, being associated with the visual experience and aesthetic appreciation. Views are particularly important to the AONB. This is because of the juxtaposition of high and low ground and the fact that recreational users value them. Without husbandry and management, views within, across, from and to the AONB may be lost or degraded.

3. A vision for this AONB

What is the Vision?

- 3.1. In 2030, the Cranborne Chase AONB will be an inspirational example of sustainable management in action.
- 3.2. A nationally appreciated place where:
- its distinctive local landscapes, historic heritage, and wildlife are conserved and enhanced by those who work and manage the land, nurturing a valued and treasured countryside for future generations;
 - its healthy soils, clean air and water are appreciated, prized and respected by all
 - its characteristic vibrant villages, profoundly rural character, and local sense of pride are tangible to all who live and visit here, or just pass through;
 - the breadth and depth of historic land use offers up its stories in the landscape today;
 - its cultural heritage is conserved, understood, enhanced, valued and enjoyed;
 - the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and environment, along with the sense of wonder and enjoyment, are appreciated by all; and
 - the quality of life remains high and the aspirations of those who live and work here are supported.

The AONB Partnership has a statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This Partnership identifies the following three components:

Conserving and enhancing Outstanding Landscapes

Our Ambitions

- A**
- The unique character, tranquillity and special qualities of the AONB landscapes are conserved and enhanced.
 - The area's special qualities are widely understood.
 - Informed decision-making strengthens the special qualities.

When change happens, it is consistent with the character of the landscape and the setting of the AONB.

We will take opportunities to restore landscape features that require it.

- B**
- All natural resources in the AONB are sustainably managed.
 - Wildlife thrives in the AONB and is able to move freely around the area.
 - The natural environment to be healthy and resilient to the effects of climate change.
- C**
- The historic and cultural environment of the AONB is conserved and enhanced.
 - Everyone understands, values and enjoys its cultural and heritage assets.

The story of the area's evolution over time should be clear to everyone.

Light pollution will be minimised to benefit of human health, wildlife, reducing expenditure and carbon emissions, bringing new opportunities for education and rural tourism.

Conserving and enhancing Living and Working Landscapes

Our Ambitions

- A**
- Our rural land is sustainably managed.

This will meet the demand for food, fuel and other produce in ways that conserve and enhance the landscape character of the AONB and deliver increased public benefits.

- B**
- A thriving rural economy ensures economic and social wellbeing and helps sustain the landscape. Local communities appreciate and care for the AONB; residents enjoy a high quality of life.

- C**
- Planning and transportation strategies, policies and decisions that affect this nationally important AONB, conserve and enhance its special qualities.

Where development is, on balance, deemed necessary, we want it located and designed to integrate fully with the landscape character and natural beauty.

- D**
- All management of, and improvements to, roads enhances the distinctive character of the area.
 - A range of more sustainable options for transport reduces the effects of transport on tranquillity and the natural environment of the AONB.

- E**
- Partners' policies and actions reflect AONB values and their national status.
 - Communities appreciate and care for the AONB.
 - Residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Conserving and enhancing Special Landscapes to Enjoy

Our Ambitions

- A**
- The area's special qualities and landscape character, its traditions, and its historic and natural assets are understood and valued by all.

- Everyone understands what the AONB designation means and why the area was designated.
- Everyone promotes and supports the AONB.
- B** • People learn about the natural, historic, and cultural heritage of the AONB.
- C** • People of all ages, abilities and backgrounds have the opportunity to take up countryside skills, training, and volunteering in the AONB.
- D** • People's physical and mental wellbeing is improved through experiencing the high quality environment of the AONB for physical activity, relaxation and inspiration.

3.3. By the end of this Plan period, substantial and measurable progress will have been made in five priority areas of work:

By the end of this plan period

Our five priorities

- 1) The profile of Cranborne Chase AONB will be significantly raised through signage, community events and activities; and significantly enhanced communications
- 2) The dark night skies of this AONB will be conserved and enhanced with the benefits valued and appreciated by communities and visitors alike
- 3) Extensive collaboration with farmers, foresters, landowners, relevant agencies and local communities will champion integrated, enhanced management of the AONB's landscapes delivering measurable enhancements to the AONB's natural and historic environment, showcasing partnership working within a designated landscape
- 4) Led by field based staff, there will be multiple opportunities for volunteers of all ages and abilities to help conserve and enhance the landscapes of the AONB whilst improving health and wellbeing
- 5) The suite of projects within the Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme bid will measurably enhance the natural, historic and cultural environments of this AONB

Who is going to make it happen?

- 3.4. The AONB Partnership developed and agreed the Vision after listening to the many people who care about this very special place. The AONB Partnership is an alliance of eighteen national and local organisations and it steers the implementation of the Management Plan (*Appendix 3 and Section 18*).
- 3.5. Wiltshire Council contains the largest proportion of the AONB and is host Authority for the AONB Team. The Team prepares the AONB Management Plan on behalf of the Partnership. The team also delivers a considerable number of projects within the annual Delivery Plan. In addition, the team undertakes the overall facilitation and coordination of Management Plan implementation by partners.
- 3.6. The Vision is a call for action. Landowners, farmers, local people, visitors, and the many organisations working in the AONB, or who have a contribution to make to it, must unite and work together to achieve this Vision.

4. What is an AONB Management Plan?

- 4.1. Local authorities that have an AONB within their area must prepare and publish a management plan. This plan 'formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it'. It has to be reviewed every five years⁷.
- 4.2. All public bodies and persons holding public office have a statutory duty to 'have regard' to the 'purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'⁸ when making decisions affecting land in an AONB (*Appendix 4*).
- 4.3. This document is the third review of the Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan first published in 2004. This plan runs from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2024. It is a statutory document and forms an important role in the delivery of services by the local authorities. It is a plan for all those that have a responsibility to look after this precious and treasured landscape. The plan sets out realistic objectives and policies for AONB partners to achieve in the next five years. Working together, these targets can be realised to the benefit of the landscapes and communities of this nationally designated area. The review process is set out in *Appendix 5*.

How does the management plan fit with the policies and plans of others?

- 4.4. National and local policies already provide a considerable level of protection for the natural beauty of the AONB. In addition, many partner organisations prepare strategies and plans that deal with a range of other issues that affect

⁷ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: Section 89

⁸ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: Section 85

the area (such as the management of development, transport, tourism, recreation, energy, water resources, and biodiversity).

- 4.5. These policies, plans and strategies will inform the AONB Management Plan. Implementation of this Management Plan will complement them and influence the preparation and delivery of other key policies, plans and processes affecting the area. This covers, for example, Local Plans and other planning documents; and Sustainable Community Strategies. An explanation of the policy context is set out in *Appendix 6*.

Who approves the plan?

- 4.6. Many people and organisations commented on this Management Plan during its preparation. The plan was subject to assessments under European directives and to public consultation between August and November 2018. The AONB Partnership (*see section 18*) endorses the plan and relevant local authorities have formally adopted it. It is published with the assistance of the partners who are responsible for much of the plan's delivery. The Partnership Board will review the Partnership Delivery Plan, which sets out the programme for achieving the Management Plan's ambitions and objectives, annually.

This Management Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Habitat Regulations Assessment, and supporting documents are all available on the Cranborne Chase AONB website: www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk

You can make enquiries about these documents to the Cranborne Chase AONB team through the website or via info@cranbornechase.org.uk

5. Context for this Partnership Plan

- 5.1. This statutory document is not prepared in isolation. In addition to extensive local consultation, there is a need to consider the wider context. Farmland and woodland dominate the landscapes of the AONB. Changes in these land uses will always have a major influence on the natural beauty of the area.

External factors

- 5.2. Four main factors are external to the AONB but will have ongoing effects on it:
 - national legislation, strategies, and policies
 - Britain's exit from the European Union
 - climate change
 - economic conditions, fluctuating world demand and prices

- 5.3. Whilst the Partnership cannot pro-actively influence these four factors, it can help to influence local and national responses to them. It will make every effort to respond to the impacts they have. They are currently facts of everyday life that we need to be aware of, keep up to date with, and act accordingly. They are accepted as strands that run throughout this document.

National legislation, strategies, and policies

- 5.4. National and international legislation and regulations are largely outside the influence of AONB partnerships, even though they may have opportunities to contribute to consultations on changes. These can encompass species protection through to pollution control; and communications and transport through to environmental and animal health regulations. The Partnership operates within the English legislative framework.
- 5.5. Governmental guidance and ministerial statements can lead to changes of direction. Partners need to be light on their feet and responsive in their application to AONB situations. The focus and emphasis of national government can change relatively quickly.
- 5.6. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan is a welcome example. This sets out action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first⁹. It also commits to undertaking a review of National Parks and AONBs.
- 5.7. Equally welcome are the Clean Growth Strategy, Industrial Strategy and the expected Environment Bill, each in articulating the interconnections and interdependencies of environmental protection and enhancements, with the economy and society.
- 5.8. The review of English AONBs and National Parks, led by Julian Glover, will consider whether there is scope for the current network of 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks in England to expand, in either size or number. It will report on the options for improving access to these landscapes, and on the support needed by those who live and work in them. It will also explore the role these designations have in growing the rural economy. DEFRA has made it clear that weakening or undermining existing protections or geographic scope is not be part of the review.
- 5.9. The review will report in 2019 (the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act). This is after the adoption and publication of this Management Plan; there may be a need to reassess our policy positions in the light of the review's findings.
- 5.10. Particularly concerning is the Government's proposal to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely match the needs and aspirations of all households; and

⁹ The Government, A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, 2018

which supports wider economic prosperity¹⁰. The drive to build ever more houses is more relevant to the countryside around urban areas but there are implications for the AONB. The context of the planning processes is set out in detail in a separate section of this chapter.

Britain's Withdrawal from the European Union

- 5.11. The uncertainty of this fundamental change to life in this country is highly likely to impact on this AONB; most probably through the direct and indirect effects of changes to farming and forestry. In turn, there are likely to be impacts on our landscapes.
- 5.12. DEFRA statements and consultation documents are clear that in future 'public money for public goods' will be the basis for financial contributions to farming¹¹. Money will be for conservation and environmental gains that benefit the public at large. It will not be simply to support commercial farming activities. These changes will not happen overnight. DEFRA has indicated that there will be an 'agricultural transition period' during which time some funds will be withdrawn from existing support mechanisms in order to fund pilot projects that, for example, restore healthy soils, improve air quality, provide clean water, and enable the countryside to teem with wildlife. The outcomes of the new Agriculture Bill in 2019 are currently awaited.
- 5.13. This AONB sees this transition to 'public money for public goods' as an exciting opportunity for AONBs in general and this AONB in particular. As farming covers 86% of the area¹², Cranborne Chase AONB is already in discussions about pilot projects. DEFRA wants 'a more dynamic, more self-reliant agriculture industry as we continue to compete internationally, supplying products of the highest standards to the domestic market and increasing exports. But, alongside this, we want a reformed agricultural and land management policy to deliver a better and richer environment in England'¹³.
- 5.14. This AONB is in a strong position to play a positive role in developing new 'agri-environment' schemes. It has an impressive track record of working collaboratively with farmers and landowners in farm clusters, and on other farm conservation projects. It has good linkages with research institutions, universities, commercial sponsors and professional bodies.

Climate change

- 5.15. A changing global climate, principally caused by the activities of man, is now regarded as an indisputable fact by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP)¹⁴, the Government and local authorities. Whilst the rate of change

¹⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government, Fixing our broken housing market, Cm Paper 9352 HMSO, February 2017

¹¹ See Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, Cmd paper 9577, HMSO, February 2018

¹² Defra (June 2016): Survey of Agriculture - Land use, livestock and agricultural workforce on commercial holdings

¹³ Paragraph 5, DEFRA, Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, Cmd paper 9577, HMSO, February 2018

¹⁴ The UKCIP web site as the authoritative source for scientifically sound research and government policy.

appears to be slowing, this is still a global issue that the AONB itself is unable to greatly influence. There is a broad consensus on the likely changes to the climate of southern England, and therefore the Cranborne Chase AONB, over the next few decades
(Appendix 9).

5.16. The evidence of recent years is that :

- summers are becoming warmer and drier
- winters are becoming milder and wetter
- extreme weather conditions are becoming more frequent

5.17. These changes have the potential to affect the landscapes, wildlife and communities of the AONB. The range of crops grown by farmers will change and water flows in rivers and streams could become more erratic. Habitats may expand, contract or shift faster than local species can migrate. New species may enter the area, some bringing disease or pests that will harm 'native' species. Or they may compete with the 'native' species for food and shelter. Tourism pressures could increase as more people decide to holiday in the UK. All of these factors could affect which flora and fauna can flourish in the area¹⁵.

5.18. Climate change mitigation describes measures or actions aimed at reducing the long-term risk and hazards of climate change. Climate change adaptation describes measures or actions that help individuals, groups and natural systems to prepare for and respond to changes in the climate. Alongside other organisations and individuals, the AONB Partnership will seek to build resilience and will support and promote mitigation and adaptation measures wherever practicable.

Economic conditions, fluctuating world demand and prices

5.19. The UK economy has been in recession with periods of slow, or minimal, growth since 2008. Government and Local Authority budgets have been cut, whilst the demand for services remains. Many charity and volunteer organisations have felt the effects.

5.20. When it comes to financing AONB initiatives and management activities, the competition for grant funding through various programmes is now more intense than ever. This is mainly from a noticeable increase in applications. Competing for scarce grants is a significant drain on team resources. More so in situations where core funds are tightly constrained.

5.21. Specific reference to the tightened economic conditions is in the Rural Economy section of the Plan. It is clear, however, that whether it is agriculture, a village shop, numbers of visitors, public transport, or the type of planning

www.ukcip.org.uk

¹⁵ 'Natural Solutions to a changing climate on the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase', 2010

applications received, the current austere economic conditions affect every facet of life.

- 5.22. There are fluctuations in the price for cereals and associated products as well as variable costs of growing those products. This is making it hard to predict future profits from arable farming. Livestock farming is crucial to the management of special habitats, like chalk grassland. It experiences considerable variations in costs and returns. Profits have been in decline for some time.
- 5.23. The fluctuating market for UK timber has had a pronounced effect on the area's woodlands. Many woodlands no longer produce significant volumes of timber. They are often more valuable for game management, recreation, or conservation than timber products. However, the increasing demand for carbon neutral wood-fuels may support some woodland management.
- 5.24. Britain's drawn out withdrawal from Europe, and DEFRA's development of new agri-environment schemes in England, each add uncertainty for farming over the period of this AONB Management Plan. The direct effects on farming practices will influence the extent to which farmers undertake conservation work as part of their operations.
- 5.25. At a global scale, the fluctuating demands for food and timber worldwide have direct impacts on market conditions. It is a very uncertain market. Ever changing demand and prices make planning and developing businesses difficult.

The statutory planning processes

- 5.26. This AONB works in parallel with its constituent Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). In particular, at a time when there is a shortage of experienced landscape staff, the AONB team can contribute positively to landscape matters and the statutory role of 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty'. It does so at both the policy formulation and the development management stages. The AONB does not have an enforcement role.
- 5.27. The LPAs of the AONB have adopted their Core Strategies / Local Plans and are embarking upon reviews of their housing strategies in response to Government's concerns about the availability of dwellings. These Core Strategies / Local Plans will be the primary local planning policy documents for the coming 10 - 15 years. Therefore, it is important that these policies address AONB topics clearly and appropriately.
- 5.28. On 24th July 2018 the Government issued a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹⁶ (Appendix 7). Key elements relating to AONBs having the 'highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty' are retained. There is emphasis on seeking social, economic, and environmental improvements in concert through the planning process. The

¹⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework, HMSO, July 2018

clear implication is that one aspect, for example the economic benefits, does not override the others. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is restricted by policies that relate to AONBs and National Parks (NPPF Para 11, footnote 6). Whilst ‘the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited’, and ‘planning permission should be refused for major development’ the definition of major development is deemed not to apply to AONBs and National Parks. (see *Appendix 22*).

- 5.29. Within AONBs, more restrictive policies apply, than outside a protected area. There is clear support for the protection of AONBs – ‘which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty’ – and **great weight** should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty. Furthermore, the guidance is to **refuse** planning permission for major developments in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances; and where there is a clear demonstration that they are in the public interest.
- 5.30. There is currently concern about the requirement for Local Authorities to identify at least a five year supply of housing land. This can lead to opportunistic, rather than carefully evaluated, development proposals.
- 5.31. Most people encounter the planning process through planning applications and development management processes. This seems to be getting more difficult for applicants to deal with, despite statements to the contrary by Government. Although established features of the process, changes to permitted development rights, charging for planning applications and pre-application advice, and making provision for the community infrastructure levy, all serve to suggest that the planning process is increasingly complicated.
- 5.32. The Localism Act 2011 and the NPPF make provision for Neighbourhood Plans (*Appendix 8*) and Neighbourhood Development Orders at a parish, or group of parishes, level. These plans can increase the amount of development, and speed up the implementation of that development, as long as they are compliant with the relevant Core Strategy / Local Plan. Such neighbourhood plans must be approved by a local referendum. Village Plans and Village Design Statements are separate matters. If appropriately prepared, the planning authority can adopt them as Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 5.33. The AONB team has been involved with a number of Neighbourhood Plan groups. There is a concern that parish councillors may be generally unaware of their statutory ‘duty of regard’ to conserving and enhancing natural beauty in AONBs. They do not always understand the legal significance of AONBs. Nor do they appreciate the limited executive powers of AONBs.

What the natural environment means to people

- 5.34. The natural world touches our lives every day. Whether we live in a city, rural village, or in the wider countryside, we rely on natural systems and landscape functions to support us. Our natural environment underpins our health, wealth and happiness and gives us a sense of place, pride and identity.

- 5.35. An AONB is a particularly special and healthy natural environment where a wide understanding of ‘conserving and enhancing natural beauty’ is especially relevant. A healthy natural environment helps local authorities in their responsibilities to:
- support economic regeneration and social care,
 - improve public health and well-being,
 - improve educational outcomes,
 - reduce crime and antisocial behaviour,
 - help communities adapt to climate change; and
 - improve the quality of life across an entire area.
 - control flooding
- 5.36. Land managers have shaped our landscapes and wildlife heritage over thousands of years. Some 96% of the AONB’s land is under agricultural or woodland management¹⁷. The decisions that farmers and land managers take determine, largely, whether society can achieve its ambitions for clean air and water, abundant wildlife, healthy soil and food production.
- 5.37. Like other AONB Partnerships, a landscape functions approach is used that values, sustains and promotes the benefits that the natural environment of the AONB provides for society. These include clean air and water, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation’s health and well-being¹⁸.
- 5.38. A Natural Capital approach (*Appendix 11*) considers the relationships between these natural assets, the services they support and the benefits derived from them.
- 5.39. An appreciation and valuation of our ‘Natural Capital’ makes explicit the link between the health of natural systems and the natural goods and services that support human well-being, as well as Government’s own work on this topic¹⁹. It seeks to maintain the integrity and functioning of whole natural systems to avoid rapid, undesirable ecological change. The national network of Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) has been established to champion the idea of valuing nature. The AONB Partnership will continue to work with relevant LNPs across the four Counties to achieve this end.
- 5.40. Local Authorities in the AONB either have developed or are developing Green Infrastructure (GI) (*Appendix 12*) policies for their areas. GI is the physical environment within and between the towns and villages. It is a network of open spaces, including formal parks, gardens and woodlands; the green corridors, waterways, street trees; and countryside. The aim is to deliver multiple benefits to people and wildlife. These include the improvement and linking of habitats for

¹⁷ Natural England (2014), Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes, NE 31 March 2014

¹⁸ Defra and Natural England advice note to AONB Partnerships 2012

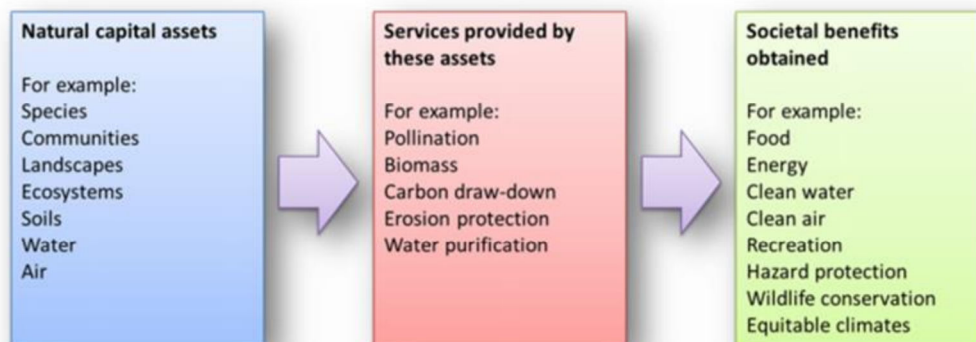
¹⁹ The Government, A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, 2018

wildlife and increased opportunities for open air recreation, and improved health and well-being for people.

Benefits from the natural environment

- 5.41. The Natural Capital Committee (NCC) is an independent body that provides advice to the government on the sustainable use of natural capital (our natural assets). These assets are the **stock** of renewable and non-renewable resources that combine to yield a flow of benefits to people. They include the stock of forests, rivers, land and minerals. The **services** that flow from this stock of resources are known as ecosystem and abiotic services. These give **benefits** that have a value to businesses and society.
- 5.42. The concept of Natural Capital is likely to become increasingly important. At the time of writing this Management Plan, the NCC is working with the Office for National Statistics in developing national natural capital accounts; with the Treasury in refining the Green Book; and with DEFRA in developing the best way to measure long term outcomes.
- 5.43. Table 1 below shows relationship between natural capital assets, the services they provide and the benefits to society.

Chart 1: Relationship between the stock of natural capital assets, the services they provide and the benefits to society



Taken from The Natural Capital Committee, 'How to do it: a natural capital workbook', April 2017

- 5.44. In order to maintain natural systems, the value of environmental goods and services needs consideration. There must be an appreciation of the future costs arising from any increase in environmental risks from actions that affect the AONB. This Management Plan aims to sustain the area's natural capital.

Four principles on which this Plan is founded

- 5.45. The statutory purposes of AONB designation are 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty'. This Management Plan sets out how the Local Authorities and

their partners aim to achieve those purposes. With this in mind, four principles provide a framework for managing change within this AONB. These are:

1. **Partnership Working** – Working together creates ownership of issues and solutions. Furthermore, the AONB Partnership does not have the resources to undertake all the work set out in this Plan. It is vital that current and new partners work together to achieve its objectives.
2. **Landscape Scale Approach** – An AONB is a nationally important landscape. The focus is on sustaining landscape character and qualities. Sites and projects within the AONB will not be seen in isolation. The landscape-scale approach involves enlarging, improving and joining up areas of land. This will create a connected environmental network across the AONB, for the benefit of the land, wildlife, and people.
3. **Landscape Functions** - or what the landscape provides for us. The landscapes of the AONB provide us with many ‘goods and services’ (see Chart 1); these need sustaining. They range from measurable things, like fresh food, clean water, healthy soils, sustainable energy and clean air; and less easily defined benefits, such as inspiration, awareness, health and well-being. The objectives in this Plan all aim to conserve and enhance these landscape functions. Adopting this balanced approach ensures that natural resources and society as a whole are positioned in the centre of the decision making process, ensuring a more equitable and long-term future is tenable. This approach has three strands:
 - i. The natural systems that operate within the AONB are complex and dynamic, and their healthy functioning should not be taken for granted.
 - ii. Those that live, work and visit the AONB all benefit from services provided by the natural environment.
 - iii. Those that benefit from the services provided within the AONB, and those who are involved in the management of them, should play a central role in making decisions.
4. **Sustainable Development** - ‘Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’²⁰. This means that within this AONB, great weight is given to conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Development has to be in the right location, at the right scale and of the right design using the right materials. The principle of sustainable development underpins this Plan (*Appendix 15*).

²⁰ Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), *Our Common Future*, published by Oxford University Press (1987)

6. Plan structure

- 6.1. Building on the purposes of designation, the issues affecting the AONB are presented under three themes:
- Conserving and enhancing - Outstanding Landscapes
 - Conserving and enhancing - Living and Working Landscapes
 - Conserving and enhancing - Special Landscapes to Enjoy
- 6.2. These themes are prefaced by an overview of the landscape character types, their special qualities, and associated spatial issues. They are then separated into nine topics, which are followed by four aspects of 'getting things done':

Outstanding Landscapes

Landscape (*chapter 8*)

Natural Environment (*chapter 9*)

Historic and Cultural Environment (*chapter 10*)

Dark Night Skies (*chapter 11*)

Living and Working Landscapes

Rural Land Management (*chapter 12*)

Planning and Transport (*chapter 13*)

Sustaining Rural Communities (*chapter 14*)

Special Landscapes to Enjoy

Awareness and Understanding (*chapter 15*)

Wellbeing, Involvement and Learning (*chapter 16*)

For each of the nine topics, the plan includes:

- **Special Characteristics and qualities** - These are the particular features, for each element, that are distinctive in this AONB
- **The Ambitions** combine to form the 'Vision' for the AONB – Achieving the ambitions will make a significant difference to the AONB.
- **Key Achievements** - Work the AONB and partners have already undertaken.
- **The Key Issues** - Many issues affect the AONB. The key issues are those to address during the life of this plan.
- **The Issues Explained** - This is information that explains the key issues

in more detail.

- **Objectives** - Specific things (not in any order of priority) to achieve in order to make progress towards the ambition. Wherever possible, these are measurable, with a realistic timescale for completion.
- **Policies** - How to achieve the objectives.

- 6.3. The nine sections are not a checklist of all the activities that affect the AONB. Rather, they provide a framework for setting out the range of topics relevant to the statutory purpose for designating the area as an AONB.
- 6.4. A final section looks at how the Management Plan will be implemented over the next five years.

Getting Things Done

The AONB Partnership (*chapter 17*)

Funding (*chapter 18*)

Implementation (*chapter 19*)

Monitoring and Evaluation (*chapter 20*)

- 6.5. None of the sections of this plan operates in isolation. There are many connections between them. Many of the objectives and policies relate to more than just the topic in which they appear. Tackling the issues identified depends upon integrated action. Action taken to achieve one set of objectives should complement and reinforce the achievement of objectives elsewhere in the Plan (*Appendix 14*).
- 6.6. The AONB Team and Partnership are catalysts for action. Rather than set out work for a five year period, the Partnership feels that an annual Delivery Plan can best reflect the changing circumstances, opportunities and resources of the 2019 – 2024 period. This will include an annual review of the work undertaken by all players to implement this Management Plan.
- 6.7. Maps referred to in the plan are in a separate booklet at the back of this document.

7. Landscape character, qualities and spatial issues

Introduction

- 7.1. The characteristics and qualities of the landscapes of this AONB are the primary justification for the designation of the area to conserve and enhance its natural beauty for the nation.
- 7.2. Their description is by broad landscape **character type**, and specific landscape **character area**. The **key characteristics** of the landscape types are set out here to provide an understanding of the scope, range, and scale of these landscape qualities. Further details of the character of the landscape areas are in both the *Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2003)* and the briefer *Sustaining Landscape Character (2006)*.
- 7.3. The inherent sensitivities of the landscapes of this AONB are set out in the *Landscape Sensitivity Study (2007)*. A detailed *Historic Landscape Characterisation (2008)* supplements the *Integrated Landscape Character Assessment*. In addition, *Historic Environment Action Plans (2012)* gives topic by topic, and area by area, advice for sustaining our cultural heritage. The booklet, *A Landscape view of trees and woodlands (2009)*, addresses the contributions trees, woodlands, and their associated habitats make to landscape matters.
- 7.4. There is a more refined landscape character assessment for the Heritage Lottery funded Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership project area (2018). It identifies 14 local Landscape Character Areas and provides greater detail on the character and qualities of these central parts of this AONB.
- 7.5. This wealth of information and analysis contributes to our understanding of the character of the AONB. To gain a full understanding of the character and qualities of this AONB requires a study of all the highlighted documents.

You can download all the supporting documents from the Cranborne Chase AONB website at <http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/planning-related-publications/>

Issues and Challenges

- 7.6. There are issues and challenges faced by the landscapes and communities of Cranborne Chase AONB that apply to many or most landscape character types. Whilst the viability of family farms and development pressures arising from demographic changes are two examples, the challenges of renewable

energy are probably the most widespread. The growing of crops, such as oil seeds and biomass, on agricultural land as alternative fuels stimulates a debate on whether farms are primarily food or fuel producers. Proposals to install fields of photovoltaic (PV) panels provide an additional strand to that debate. They also bring about long term changes to the appearance of the countryside. However, the increasing popularity of wood-burning stoves, and the associated need for wood-fuel, can provide a new economic reason for managing farm woodlands.

- 7.7. Visually intrusive energy and communications developments affect not just the aesthetics of the AONB landscapes and associated views; they also affect the integrity of the finest of the nation's landscapes.
- 7.8. The appearance, and appreciation, of the AONB from areas outside relates to all landscape types; as do the qualities of the views to and from the AONB. This is particularly relevant to the escarpment, hill, and downland landscapes. Their elevated positions make possible long and wide ranging views. The areas within those views contribute to the setting of the AONB, an aspect that is of increasing value for heritage assets.
- 7.9. Awareness of the significance of Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees has increased. Nevertheless, action is largely voluntary, and often dependent on the skills and enthusiasm of a few individuals. Furthermore, there are parts of this AONB where trees and hedges are not typical or historically significant features. In these areas, well-intentioned planting continues to change and block extensive views of the open downlands. New planting should take full account of landscape character and historic features.
- 7.10. The availability of funding for incentives and actions to conserve and enhance at a landscape scale is a challenge for the whole AONB.
- 7.11. The changes to agricultural support and agri-environment schemes flowing from the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union will occur during the period of this Management Plan. Government is taking forward the Natural Capital concept, seeking to sustain and enhance the nation's natural assets. Linked with this, DEFRA states that there will be an agricultural transition period to implement a 'public goods for public money' approach to future schemes. The clear intention is that farmers will then receive funding for the environmental benefits they provide rather than the volume of their products or the extent of their holding.
- 7.12. Defra has called for tests or trials to help evaluate the basis for any new agri-environment schemes. This AONB Partnership has considerable experience working with, and facilitating, self-help farm clusters to enhance farmland wildlife and habitats. It is happy to engage pro-actively with any tests or trials within potential new agri-environment schemes. Further refinement of landscape character data is, therefore, likely.
- 7.13. This appraisal outlines the landscape characteristics and qualities of the eight landscape types of this AONB. It then focuses on the additional issues and challenges that are particularly pertinent to each of them. The Management

Plan policies and actions seek to address these issues and to reinforce and enhance landscape character.

Landscape type 1: Chalk Escarpments

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Areas:

Character Area 1A - Melbury to Blandford Chalk Escarpment

Character Area 1B - West Wiltshire Downs Chalk Escarpment

Character Area 1C - Fovant and Chalke Chalk Escarpment

- Dramatic chalk escarpments eroded into spurs and deep coombes, with a generally sharp transition from the associated downlands
- Underlying geology of Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk giving rise to predominantly thin calcareous soils
- Areas of unimproved chalk grassland of international importance, traditionally maintained by livestock grazing
- Steepness of slope leads to an absence of farmsteads and settlements
- Field systems on lower slopes, including strip lynchets, close to Medieval villages sited along the spring line
- Improved pasture and arable fields occupy the shallower, more accessible slopes where straight-sided fields represent late 18th / early 19th century enclosure
- Cross dykes and Bronze Age features on the escarpment edge
- Hanging woodland and sunken lanes are features of the steep, enclosing chalk coombes
- Tracks and bridleways typically follow diagonal routes across the steep slopes
- Panoramic views over adjacent landscapes

Issues and challenges

- Decreases in livestock grazing leading to loss of grassland habitat to scrub
- Visibility of changes within the landscape and areas round it
- A350 corridor, intensification of use and highway paraphernalia, and potential visibility of any development
- Maintenance of heritage assets
- Visibility of changes within the A30 corridor and associated Greensand Terrace fields
- Management and renovation of Fovant Badges (and similar features)

- Conservation of historic features

Landscape type 2: Open Chalk Downland

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Areas:

Character Area 2A West Wiltshire Downs

Character Area 2B Southern Downland Belt

- Large-scale landform of broad rolling hills interspersed by wide valleys, some with high quality chalk rivers whilst others are seasonal or dry
- Dominated by Upper Chalk geology with drift clay and flint capping, with associated woodland and eye-catching tree clumps, on higher ground
- A predominantly arable landscape divided into large, rectangular units with straight-sided fields representing late 18th / early 19th century enclosure from extensive open grazing areas
- Remnant chalk grassland, ancient broad-leaved woodland, and yew woodland are important habitats
- Beech trees line lanes and comprise formal avenues
- Large blocks of woodland and coppice contrast with the open arable fields
- Main roads cut across the undulating landscape linking major settlements on either side of the AONB
- Ancient route ways follow east-west ridges
- Large open skies and extensive panoramic views
- Low density scattered settlement of farmsteads and the occasional downland village
- Numerous Neolithic burial and ritual monuments and Bronze Age barrows
- Later pre-historic and Romano-British ditches and defensive 'castle' earthworks

Issues and challenges

- Arable crop changes influenced by globalisation, commodity prices, farm inputs and costs impacting on both the aesthetics and the landscape functions
- Exposed transport corridors - A303 / A350 / A354 - intensification of use and highway paraphernalia, and potential visibility of any development
- Erosion and truncation of Ancient Monuments
- Hedge planting blocking views and modifying the open, expansive, character
- Fertilizer use and impacts on aquifers

- Visual and soil impacts of extensive pig keeping
- Rectangular, unsympathetic, 20th century game coverts

Landscape type 3: Wooded Chalk Downland

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Area:

Character Area 3A Cranborne Chase

- An elevated downland landscape with dramatic intersecting coombe valleys and rounded upstanding ridges
- Dominated by an Upper Chalk geology with drift clay with flints capping higher ground
- A well wooded landscape with large woods, shelter belts, copses and clumps creating a series of enclosed spaces or 'rooms' surrounded by trees
- Beech lined lanes and tracks criss-cross the downland
- Mosaic of unenclosed downland, improved grassland and arable fields, often dating from 19th century enclosure, between the woodland
- Chalk grassland, ancient woodland, and coppice provide important nature conservation habitats
- Typically low density, scattered settlement of individual farmsteads with the occasional downland village or Medieval hunting lodge
- Visible archaeological features including Neolithic long barrows, Bronze Age round barrows, prehistoric to Romano-British earthworks and field systems
- Panoramic views from upstanding chalk ridges to adjacent ridges and into valleys / coombes

Issues and challenges

- Conservation of heritage / archaeological interests
- Impacts of climate change on mixed farming and forestry / ancient woodlands
- Connectivity between woodlands and maintenance of enclosures
- Hedge and screen planting, coupled with reduced management, blocking views and modifying character
- Declining coppice management

Landscape type 4: Downland Hills

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Area:

Character Area 4A Martin - Whitsbury Downland Hills

- A series of small scale but prominent hills and knolls
- Dominated by Upper Chalk geology giving rise to argyilic brown earths
- Land cover is slightly more arable than grassland, with improved pasture on lower ground towards the river valleys
- Dominated by a pattern of medium to large Parliamentary enclosure type fields
- Deciduous and coniferous woodland, clothing the crests of the slopes, silhouetted against the skyline
- Low density, dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads
- The absence of major roads contributes to the feeling of remoteness and tranquillity
- A number of ancient woodlands including Burwood, Ashwood Copse and Bouldsbury Wood (SSSI)
- Neolithic and Bronze Age burial monuments, prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures, settlements, field systems and hill forts contribute to the plethora of visible, historic features of the landscape
- Panoramic views from hill tops

Issues and challenges

- Conservation of archaeology and ancient woodlands
- Development pressures on the villages
- 'Horsiculture' and changes in sense of place
- Decrease in agricultural stock grazing

Landscape type 5: Chalk River Valleys

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Areas:

Character Area 5A Wylde Chalk River Valley

Character Area 5B Ebble Chalk River Valley

Character Area 5C Stour and Avon Tributary Valleys

- Strongly enclosing valley sides, frequently eroded to form dry valleys, but in some places quite wide (eg Ebble)
- The steepest valley slopes have retained their semi-natural chalk grassland or are clothed in 'hanging' woodland while the shallow valley sides have been exploited for cultivation

- The clear, fast-flowing chalk rivers are a key habitat
- The floodplains support water meadows, cress beds and damp pasture
- The valleys typically provide convenient transport corridors, with the Wylde valley containing a trunk road and railway
- The rural landscapes are sometimes interrupted by the large volumes of traffic that use the valleys as transport corridors to organised events
- Straight-sided fields represent late 18th/early 19th century Parliamentary enclosure, with large scale fields resulting from 20th century boundary loss
- Field boundaries and footpaths often reflect the tracks, droves and hollow ways that took livestock from and to the downs in the Medieval period
- A series of linear spring line villages typically lie at the foot of the valley slopes
- Isolated Neolithic long barrows, Bronze Age round barrows and water meadow channels on the valley floor contribute to visible archaeology

Issues and challenges

- Water flows and water resource management
- 'Horsiculture' and loss of sense of place
- Development pressures (expensive properties, high demand, gentrification, replacement dwellings)
- Highway 'improvements'
- Infrastructure clutter (eg telephone and electricity poles, signs)

Landscape type 6: Greensand Terrace

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Areas:

Character Area 6A Fovant Greensand Terrace

Character Area 6B Kilmington Greensand Terrace

- Flat aprons of land from which the dramatic chalk escarpments and greensand hills rise
- Dominated by arable fields of Parliamentary enclosure
- Large, geometric fields and open skies contrast with the smaller scale, enclosed landscape of the adjacent Greensand Hills
- Upper Greensand geology giving rise to rich brown earth soils that have a high agricultural value
- Land use is predominantly agricultural, including cereal cropping, grass rotations, dairy farming and stock rearing

- Mixed woodland runs in discontinuous belts along the base of the chalk escarpment
- Coniferous belts shelter dispersed, and isolated, farmsteads
- Settlements tend to be at the interface with, or within, the Greensand Hills
- General absence of prehistoric earthworks
- Long views which are also the setting of views from the escarpments and hills

Issues and challenges

- A30 corridor
- Highway paraphernalia, traffic volumes, and loss of tranquillity
- Field sizes, hedge management, and intensification of farming
- Development pressures
- Visual intrusion of farm buildings

Landscape type 7: Greensand Hills

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Areas:

Character Area 7A Donhead - Fovant Hills

Character Area 7B Penselwood - Longleat Hills

- Upper Greensand is exposed as a band between the older clays and younger chalk between Mere and Wilton; elsewhere the hills overlook the Greensand Terraces
- The Greensand typically forms upstanding ridges and hills that have been eroded by tributaries of the major rivers into a series of rounded knolls and deep valleys
- Hills and ridges support a large proportion of woodland, both deciduous and coniferous
- Extensive woodlands 'hide' recreational development, e.g. Center Parc
- Country houses and estates, some very large and spreading across the Greensand Terraces, are set within landscaped parkland, and contribute to the scenic beauty of the area
- Distinctive patterns of settlement include villages hidden in the shelter of the deep valleys
- Fortifications are strategically located on the hilltops
- Ancient and narrow sunken lanes wind their way through the hills
- Small and irregular fields characterise areas of agricultural land use
- Meadows and wet woodland are typical of the valley floors

Issues and challenges

- Heritage conservation especially in parklands with visitor pressures
- Infrastructure clutter (eg telephone & electricity poles, signs)
- Viability of commercial forestry
- Livestock grazing
- Limited access due to narrow lanes
- Traffic and development leading to loss of tranquillity
- Enlarged replacement dwellings

Landscape type 8: Rolling Clay Vales

This Landscape Type comprises the following Landscape Area:

- Character Area 8A The Vale of Wardour
- Predominantly clay vale occupying a series of eroded anticlinal axes between the chalk downlands
- Varied underlying geology with many different geological exposures leading to outcrops of hard rock
- A mixed agricultural landscape with small scale fields of lush improved pasture and arable with water meadows on the valley floor
- Wooded character, with broadleaf and mixed woodland and copses (some of ancient origin) scattered across the Vale, reinforced by bushy hedgerows bounding most fields
- Layout of fields, farms and villages illustrate the pattern of Medieval settlement, clearance and farming
- A predominantly enclosed landscape, with close views limited by hedges, and frequent ups and downs resulting from the varied geology
- Narrow, twisty, lanes
- Rivers and their tributaries meander through the vale
- A further sense of enclosure is provided by the surrounding upland landscapes
- Villages dispersed over the floor of the vale

Issues and challenges

- Viability of family farms and dairying
- Water regimes (Nadder and Sem rivers)
- Transportation and vehicle accessibility
- Infrastructure clutter (eg telephone and electricity poles, signs)

- Greater benefits from the railway, and associated parking needs
- Development pressures, particularly around Tisbury, and potential loss of character

OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPES

8. Landscape

The topography, geology, and vegetation, and the ways they have evolved with the climate and human usage, come together to form the landscapes we experience around us today. All landscapes have character; however, that character is more substantial, obvious, and extensive in the nationally important Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We use characteristics and qualities to describe and assess those cherished landscapes.

8.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to landscape:

- A peaceful, tranquil, deeply rural area; largely 'unspoilt' and maintained as a living agricultural landscape.
- The scale of the landscape is often grand and dramatic with the 'intensity' of landscape character almost palpable.
- The open downland offers wide expansive skies, dominant skylines, dramatic escarpments and panoramic views.
- Unity of the underlying chalk expressed in the distinctive and sometimes dramatically sculpted landforms, open vistas, escarpments and coombes.
- A rich land use history with many ancient hilltop forts and barrows.
- A bountiful mosaic of habitats playing host to a myriad of wildlife.
- Overlain by a woodland mosaic - including the eye-catching hill-top copses, veteran parkland trees and avenues, extensive areas of wooded downland and ancient forest together with more recent game coverts.
- Three major chalk river valleys with their individual distinctiveness.
- Distinctive settlement pattern along the valleys and vales, and small Medieval villages along the scarp spring line.
- Local vernacular building styles include the patterns of knapped flint, brick, cob, clunch, clay tiles and straw thatch.
- Strong sense of place and local distinctiveness represented by the use of local building materials and small-scale vernacular features such as the sunken lanes and distinctive black and white signposts.
- Strong sense of remoteness.
- Expanse of dark night skies and ability to see the Milky Way.

Ambition

- 8.2. The unique character, tranquillity and special qualities of the landscapes in the AONB are conserved and enhanced for future generations. There will be a widespread understanding of the area's special qualities, and informed decision-making will strengthen these qualities. When change happens, it is to be consistent with the character of the landscape and the setting of the AONB. Everyone will take opportunities to restore landscape features that require it.

Key Achievements

- **Publications** - The effective use of the AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Sensitivity Study, and Tranquillity Study by planning policy and development management officers within the nine local planning authorities. The AONB team clearly identifies landscape character in all planning application responses.
- **Landscape protection** – Avoided potentially negative impacts on the landscape through advice, research and authoritative reports; and input to specific development applications and appeals.
- **Landscape enhancement advice** - Detailed discussions with Wessex Water led to a four-year funding package to enhance the farmland landscapes surrounding a strategic pipeline installation and associated pumping and storage facilities.
- **A Landscape View of Trees and Woodlands** - offers woodland owners, farmers and advisors a fuller understanding of the landscape character context in which they are working.
- **AONB Tranquillity Study** - The methodology behind the Tranquillity Study is now valued as good practice. This is now being used by the New Forest National Park and other Protected Areas in the southwest to determine their own levels of tranquillity.
- **Undergrounding of power lines** - Power lines have been laid underground to enhance the landscape from the viewing area in front of the Fovant Badges (eight military badges cut into the chalk) and around the site of the 13th Century chapel at Fifield Bavant and in the conservation area of Horningsham.
- **Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Character Assessment** – This study provides a more refined understanding of the landscape character of this Landscape Partnership Scheme area. It will support a 5 year programme of activities to enhance the understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the landscape by all ages, resident or visitors from outside area, through a range of natural, historic and cultural projects across the area. Its ambition is to provide a significant landscape legacy.

Key Issues

1. Understanding and sustaining landscape character - It is crucial that all landscape managers and planners understand, appreciate, and use the Landscape Character Assessments.
2. Monitoring landscape change over time - Long-term, objective monitoring of landscape change takes time and resources. Fixed-point photography locations have been installed to track changes although it will be a while before it helps to determine long-term trends. Such trends may be a result of global issues such as climate change, food prices and/or demand affecting rural land management.
3. Enhancing tranquillity and Dark Night Skies - National data shows the general loss of dark night skies and the risk of light pollution encroaching on the dark skies of the AONB²¹. However, 90% of the AONB falls in the top 2 categories of darkness, as evidenced by CPRE research in 2016. This makes this AONB the last dark area in southern, central England²². (See also Chapter 11 Dark Night Skies)

The Issues Explained

- 8.3. The AONB is a large area with both consistent character, for example the downlands of West Wiltshire, and considerable diversity and contrast. There are the ancient forests and woodland of Cranborne Chase that contrast with the deeply incised chalk coombes close by. In addition, there are the more intimate and secluded chalk river valleys with their distinctive pattern of settlement.
- 8.4. Its special qualities include its diversity, distinctiveness, sense of history and remoteness, dark night skies, tranquillity. It is deeply rural and largely free from development outside settlements. Landscapes are sensitive to many factors to a greater or lesser degree. Some crops create a change that lasts a few months while the planting or felling of woodland can cause change that persists for decades. Built development can introduce changes that are rather more permanent. There are declines in the quality of some characteristic features. Some are brought about by machine trimming of hedgerows; the planting of hedges contrary to landscape character; or planting that cuts out views.
- 8.5. A greater understanding of the character of the landscapes is crucial to helping everyone make informed decisions that contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
- 8.6. Meaningful analysis of landscape change over time can use considerable resources, depending on the aim of any such study. A tried and tested methodology using fixed-point photography in Devon produces a series of repeatable images through time. This is in use in this AONB but there is a need

²¹ National Framework Data sheet PLNB9 2013: based on National Tranquillity Mapping Data 2006 developed for the Campaign to Protect Rural England and Natural England by the University of Northumbria. OS Licence number 100018881.

²² CPRE (June 2016) Night Blight: Mapping England's light pollution and dark skies

to take photographs at regular times in consistent light and weather conditions. There are now twelve fixed-point locations with landowner permissions.

- 8.7. Tranquillity is important for our mental and physical well-being. It improves our quality of life. Power lines, masts, cars, roads, light pollution and building developments can erode the tranquillity that means so much to all of us. We want to ensure the dark starry skies of much of the AONB remain that way and continue to be seen and appreciated. However, inappropriate lighting can waste energy and reduce landscape quality²³. This is explained in detail in Chapter 11 – Dark Night Skies.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
LAN A	The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the AONB are fully understood by policy makers and land managers.	LAN1	Provide appropriate training on a range of landscape matters to relevant partners.
		LAN2	Review the 2003 Integrated Landscape Character Assessment to develop guidance for the Landscape Character Types/Areas to inform land use planning and landscape management
		LAN3	Develop guidance for a Landscape Character Type or Area to inform land use planning and landscape management activities.
LAN B	The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the AONB and its settings are conserved and enhanced.	LAN4	Ensure the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are sensitive to change.
		LAN5	Encourage, support and analyse research on landscape issues affecting the AONB and

²³

e.g. Dorset County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011 to 2026 Policy LTP C-4 - The street lighting network will be managed and improved to increase energy efficiency, to minimise environmental impact and to enhance conservation areas and areas identified for public realm improvements. Alterations to street lighting should not compromise road safety or personal security.

			its surroundings to inform policy formulation and the consequent action required.
		LAN6	Determine the factors that contribute to, or detract from, tranquillity to ensure that policies will more effectively conserve and enhance levels of tranquillity.
		LAN7	Pursue opportunities to underground and remove power and telecommunications lines and poles, and other incongruous features where they detract from the Special Qualities.
LAN C	Understand the rate and degree of landscape change within the AONB.	LAN8	Undertake fixed point photography biennially to identify areas where landscape character, condition, or quality has been or is being lost. This will inform potential restoration and enhancement measures.
<i>(Additional Information: Landscape Appendix 28)</i>			

9. Natural Environment

Our natural resources, such as geology and soils, clean air and water, provide the fundamentals of life itself. These natural capital assets are the basis for the rich diversity and abundance of wildlife that thrives across the AONB. They offer us a high quality, healthy and stimulating environment. What we see around us now is the result of the interactions of natural and human activities over centuries. We need to better understand, promote and value all that the natural environment provides; to conserve and enhance that environment; and address the increasing uncertainties caused by climatic, economic, and social change.

The first chairman of this AONB Partnership was the late Dr Dick Potts, Director of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. His enthusiasm for sustaining and enhancing wildlife in active agricultural landscapes has remained a key priority for this AONB

9.1. Special characteristics and qualities that makes this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to the natural environment:

- Main geological features are extensive, wide, and gently rolling chalk ridges with escarpments and dip slopes, clay caps with flint deposits and valleys - both dry and occupied by rivers and streams. The central clay vale has areas of hard rock and a stone quarry. The cultivated flat Greensand Terraces contrast with the undulations of the more wooded Greensand Hills
- Rich ecological character expressed in the diversity of habitats including the distinctive species-rich chalk downland, clear fast flowing chalk streams and rivers, ancient and calcareous woodlands and rare chalk heath and water meadows.
- An abundance of both emblematic wildlife species and those suffering decline such as the Greater horseshoe bat, Adonis blue and Duke of Burgundy butterflies, Tree sparrow and Skylark.
- Clear streams and rivers supporting wild trout, grayling, dace and chub, together with the fast disappearing water vole and aquatic species that rely on high quality water such as the white-clawed crayfish, seriously threatened by the introduction of non-native crayfish.
- Extensive tracts of arable land supporting the six most nationally threatened farmland birds; the Grey partridge, Lapwing, Turtle dove, Yellow wagtail, Tree sparrow and Corn bunting and rare arable plants, such as the Prickly poppy and Pheasants' eye.
- Cranborne Chase is particularly notable for its unusually high proportion of ancient woodland within a chalk landscape. This is largely due to its historic status as a royal hunting area.
- Ancient woods and woodland still under active coppicing management.

Ambition

- 9.2. The natural resources of the AONB will be managed sustainably. The AONB will be a place where wildlife thrives and is able to move freely across the area. The natural environment will be healthy and resilient to the effects of climate change.

Key Achievements

- This AONB was the lead partner in the **South Wiltshire Farmland Bird Project** (2009-15), which was part of the larger Natural England-led **South West Farmland Bird Initiative**. Its purpose was to reverse the decline in numbers of the six most threatened farmland bird species; Grey partridge, Lapwing, Corn bunting, Yellow wagtail, Turtle dove and Tree sparrow. It worked with arable farmers to provide key year-round bird habitat to include safe nesting areas, summer insect food and winter seed food.
- Forty four bird species were monitored during the project between 2011 and 2016; 19 that make up the Farmland Bird Index and a selection of other 'Birds of Conservation Concern' plus the Brown hare. This scientific monitoring showed that 42% of species assessed showed a significant positive population response to Farmland Bird Project management compared to population trends on plots with no such management. A further 27% of species showed non-significant responses²⁴.
- There have been other 'spin off' wildlife benefits, particularly for rare arable plants and the Brown hare. The project received national recognition on the BBC's Countryfile programme in 2013; and in 2015 won the Bowland Award, awarded annually for the best project, best practice, or outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by the National Association of AONBs.
- **Farm Conservation Project** - in conjunction with further funding from Wessex Water via their Corfe Mullen to Salisbury Transfer Scheme (with additional funds from their Biodiversity Partner's Programme in 2015), the Farmland Bird Project to broaden its horizons to become this AONB's Farm Conservation Project. This project brings together groups of neighbouring farmers into 'clusters'. These work very effectively to initiate landscape-scale conservation of soil, water, and biodiversity, and potentially much more. Current and new clusters cover around 38,000 hectares. Our Farm Conservation Adviser also works with farmers submitting applications to Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Scheme. This project was also awarded Wiltshire Life's Conservation Project of the Year in 2017.
- The clusters effectively initiate landscape-scale conservation of soil, water, and biodiversity. This environmental work is at a much larger scale than anything undertaken previously. It has the capacity to meet Sir John Lawton's key aim of achieving "more, bigger, better and joined" wildlife

habitats as outlined in the 2010 report 'Making Space for Nature'²⁵, recently re-iterated in the Governments 25 Year Plan for the Environment.

- **Natural capital** - Cranborne Chase AONB was a key stakeholder in two major natural capital projects:
 - **Big Chalk** aimed to increase the resilience of natural capital stocks within the protected landscapes that share a common chalk geology throughout the South East and South West. Comprehensive mapping and modelling of natural capital at different spatial scales could then support decision making at the strategic level (specifically Local Plans, National Park and AONB area based Management Plans) and be used to target interventions at catchment, farm and field level.
 - **Wessex BESS** (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Multifunctional Landscapes 2011-17) focused on lowland landscapes in the area around Salisbury Plain and the northern part of this AONB. This six-year programme sought to understand how biodiversity underpins the functions or services that landscapes provide. Through this understanding, policy makers and land managers would be better informed to make decisions.
- **Rare arable plants** - Populations of rare arable plants have declined dramatically over the past 60 years and they are the most critically threatened group of plants in the UK. In 2010, a Wessex Water funded study was undertaken of rare arable plant distribution in the AONB, prepared jointly between the AONB, Black Sheep Countryside Management and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. It pinpointed rare arable flora 'hotspots' together with indications of where good arable flora communities were likely to be present. The report consequently determined 39% of the AONB as an Arable Flora Target Area where focused management for arable plants, would be likely to be most effective.
- **'Stepping Stones' (2012-2015)** – This partnership project aimed to improve existing, and create new, species rich chalk grassland habitat resulting in improved habitat connectivity, enabling species to move more freely to new areas. This joint initiative between Cranborne Chase and North Wessex Downs AONBs, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, many farmers, Black Sheep Countryside Management and a host of volunteers, created an additional 344ha of linked, species rich chalk grassland. Volunteers alone undertook 230 hours work planting out around 23,000 plug plants.
- **Cranborne Chase Ancient Woodland Priority Area** – one of four areas in the South West. The Forestry Commission undertook a mapping and targeting exercise in the south west to identify robust habitat networks centred around clusters of ancient and native woodlands, where landscape connectivity and permeability offered the best opportunity to link and extend ancient woodlands. By working on a landscape scale the resilience of these

habitats to climate change and other threats can be enhanced. In 2009, an Ancient Woodland Priority Area was established in Cranborne Chase.

- **Sustainable Development Fund** grant support to projects / training of volunteers:
 - Around 50 volunteers have been trained to provide the Environment Agency with early warning of water pollution at 24 sites on the Rivers Wylde, Nadder, Ebble, Stour and Allen with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust;
 - assess the current distribution and abundance of the White Clawed Crayfish over the length of the River Allen through Dorset Wildlife Trust
 - reconnect and enhance the habitats for rare and threatened wildlife along the River Allen;
 - identify signs of Chalara dieback of Ash caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*; raise awareness of Chalara dieback of Ash particularly to land owners; and celebrate the ash trees' many uses, history, ecology, biology, cultural significance and folklore.
- **Ancient Trees Project** – This project, with funding from Hampshire County Council, trained volunteers to identify and record ancient, veteran and 'notable' trees with over 150 trees recorded in five Hampshire parishes. Inspired by this work, volunteers came together to form another tree recording group in the Donheads, Wiltshire, during 2016-17 and undertook similar recordings.

Key issues

1. **Fragmented and isolated habitats** – This AONB has some of the best, last remaining chalk grasslands in Europe. While supporting a vast diversity of plant, animal and invertebrate species, its fragmented nature often denies those species the opportunity to flourish through expanding their range or populations. The fragmentation of priority habitats also extends to ancient woodland, other deciduous woodland, semi-improved grassland and lowland meadows.
2. **Wildlife species decline** - Many species of birds, butterflies, plants and mammals that were once common across the AONB, are in decline²⁶.
3. **Valuing the benefits we receive from the natural environment** - There is a need to demonstrate that the natural environment provides benefits of measurable value to society and everyone understands those values.
4. **Land management practices** – Intensive, or changing, land management practices can lead to a decline in wildlife and reduced soil and water quality.

5. **Unintended consequences** – generalised conservation measures, such as hedge planting, applied without attention to the local situation can compromise priority habitats and provide cover for predators.
6. **Limited means to conserve and enhance** natural environment, habitats and species. Through close working relationships with farmers and landowners over the years, the will to conserve certainly exists; the combination of time, knowledge or experience to undertake necessary work may not necessarily be present.
7. **Alien species, pests and pathogens** – These pose risks to native wildlife and increase uncertainty for all land managers.
8. **Climate change** – Ongoing climate change may pose a threat to the characteristic landscapes and natural beauty of the area as habitats evolve.
9. **Agri-environment schemes** – The management of many of the AONB's most valuable habitats has been primarily through agri-environment schemes with the aid of Government and EU funding. Options within those schemes have not always been adequately attuned to the needs of the landscape and habitats that they were designed to conserve. Funding has reduced over the years and the future of these schemes is now uncertain.
10. **Brexit** - The decision to leave the EU will have major ramifications for agricultural trade in the UK, which could affect the ways much of the AONB's farmland is managed and hence the wildlife that depends on it.

The Issues Explained

- 9.3. The chalk grasslands and rivers of the AONB, with their rare wildlife, are of international importance. A significant proportion of the woodland is of ancient origin and the area contains some of the best stands of ancient trees in Europe²⁷. The extensive tracts of arable land support islands of rare arable plants and can be a stronghold for farmland birds. However, the areas of habitat favouring these important species are often fragmented and isolated. Wildlife habitats need to be big enough and sufficiently well connected for wildlife to thrive. Species need corridors to move through the landscape in response to a changing environment.
- 9.4. During the last few decades, management regimes that were focused on creating higher crop yields have led to habitat change and the loss of wildlife. Since the 1970s, the UK populations of many of our farmland birds have been in steep decline. In the south west, farmland bird numbers fell by 45% between 1970 and 1994; and a further 8% between 1994 and 2007.
- 9.5. Though the current rate of decline is not as steep as during the 1970s and 1980s, a short-term decline of 9% since 2010 shows that farmland birds, and especially farmland specialists, are still in trouble.²⁸ For example, Turtle Dove

²⁷ <http://www.ancient-treehunt.org.uk/ancienttrees/findingthem>

²⁸ <https://www.bto.org/science/monitoring/developing-bird-indicators>

numbers have declining by 93% since 1994 and may well be at risk of global extinction. However the results from the Farmland Bird Project referenced above in Key Achievements show that with targeted management of sufficient habitats, reversing the decline is possible.

- 9.6. Even once common species are also suffering unprecedented and drastic declines. Hedgehog numbers have plummeted by over 50% since 1994, voles by 30% over the last ten years and dormice are vulnerable to extinction in the UK (see Appendix 29).
- 9.7. Populations of rare arable plants have declined dramatically over the past 60 years. They are the most critically threatened group of wild plants in the UK. The report, 'Assessing the Distribution of Rare Arable Plants in the Cranborne Chase AONB (2010)', identifies the important arable plant hotspots and will help refine targeting, surveying and promotion of semi-natural habitat restoration, creation and management.
- 9.8. The four County Biological Records Centres hold incomplete records for species presence and/or distribution in the AONB. Farmer clusters have been frustrated to date by their lack of knowledge of species present on their holdings. There is a need to actively encourage the training and involvement of volunteers in identifying, recording and mapping of fauna and flora to greatly improve the knowledge base across the AONB. (More in Chapter 17)
- 9.9. The Lawton review of ecological sites and networks '*Making Space for Nature*'²⁹ advocates for the creation of more effective ecological networks through the establishment of more, bigger and better quality wildlife sites that are better connected. This vision is a key aspiration in this Plan. The majority of the land needed to achieve this is currently under some form of agricultural, forestry or game management. It is, therefore, vital that habitat creation, enhancement and improved connectivity become a part of viable land management systems.
- 9.10. The Government has stated in its policy paper '*A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*'³⁰ that it will publish a Strategy for Nature and develop a Nature Recovery Network that aims to provide an additional 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat. The Government has announced a forthcoming Environment Bill that will provide the legal framework reinforcing its pledge to leave the environment in a better state over the next 25 years. An Agriculture Bill is also due before the end of 2018 that 'will map the future of UK farming outside the EU'. At the time of writing this Management Plan Review, there were no further details.
- 9.11. The natural capital of the AONB, the elements of the natural environment which provide valuable goods and services to people such as clean air, clean water, healthy soils, food and recreation, is both very high in quality and quantity.

²⁹ Professor Sir John Lawton et al (2010), Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, Submitted to the Secretary of State, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 16 September 2010

³⁰ A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment Defra 1st February 2018

- 9.12. The Natural Capital Committee is an independent committee that advises the Government on the sustainable use of our natural assets. This committee reported that the elements of the natural environment that provide valuable goods and services to people are in long-term decline.
- 9.13. This decline will continue into the future, and is likely to accelerate, unless there is some radical departure from the approaches of the past.³¹ This could include biodiversity net gain as a key planning principle or a landscape-scale / catchment-based approach to conservation³². It may also include widespread payments for the services the landscape provides (also known as ecosystem services) or the routine application of natural capital accounting.
- 9.14. Relatively straightforward agri-environment options such as tree planting can sometimes take place in inappropriate locations that can lead to a change in landscape character, the reduction or destruction of remnant grassland habitat and a reduction in the suitability of the area for ground nesting birds.
- 9.15. Evidence from the farmer cluster work, has highlighted the strong desire of landowners and farmers to help conserve and enhance the natural environment. However, effective and timely conservation work might well compete with priority work on the farm. Additional knowledge and experience of conservation techniques needs to be delivered through training opportunities open to farmers and volunteers and through practical input from conservation professionals, such as rangers, with the assistance of volunteers.
- 9.16. During consultations in 2010 towards a funding bid, the AONB gained strong anecdotal evidence that that the area is seen as a 'black hole' for volunteering, with communities, including many youngsters, welcoming any opportunity for countryside skills training and a chance to put that to use. Chapter 16 describes this in more detail but, in line with the aims of the Governments 25 Year Environment Plan, there is proven, latent demand from communities to become involved in the conservation and enhancement of the AONBs natural environment. Engagement with countryside management professionals could only assist in nurturing that demand.
- 9.17. There is an increase in the number of alien species, pests and pathogens entering the natural environment, with new ones being recorded almost monthly³³. In May 2018, the Forestry Commission noted at least 30 new pests and diseases affecting livestock, and 15 affecting trees in the UK. These can have a devastating effect on the natural environment and livelihoods. The particular dangers to woodland from pests and diseases is growing, with Dieback of Ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) and Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) two of the most recent examples. Dieback of ash may have a very serious effect on the ash trees in this AONB; whilst opinions vary, there is broad consensus that there is a reasonable chance that

³¹ Natural Capital Committee, The State of Natural Capital, third report 2015

³² The AONB Partnership values and advocates the full use of paragraphs 174/175 of the NPPF that set out the principles to protect and enhance biodiversity and when determining planning application, including net biodiversity gain.

³³ In May 2018, the Forestry Commission noted 30 new pests and diseases affecting livestock, and 15 affecting trees in the UK. See <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/geography/our-research/ecss/webber11.pdf>

we will lose a significant portion of ash trees, a substantive loss to our landscapes and heritage. The damage caused by deer and Grey squirrels is also of increasing concern.

- 9.18. Climate change continues to influence the natural world. The evidence of recent years is that the AONB's climate is likely to become warmer and wetter in winter, and hotter and drier in summer. There will be more extreme weather events resulting in droughts and floods. Uncertainty and severity in the weather system poses very real threats to our way of life and our environment.
- 9.19. Although it is possible to reduce the effects of climate change with positive action, significant changes will still occur. This is because past emissions have already raised carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. The area needs help to adapt to the impacts of climate change in a way that helps to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. Further climate change information and the range of mitigation and adaptation measures are shown in *Appendix X*³⁴.
- 9.20. Farming requires a profitable future to stay in business, sustain farming families, safeguard the environment and mitigate climate change. For centuries, land managers and farmers have shaped the landscape and environment, including its wildlife, soil and water quality, as they went about their work.
- 9.21. There is a need to develop more effective environmentally-friendly farming practices if wildlife is to thrive in the AONB. As Brexit approaches in 2019, Government has pledged to continue to support agriculture, albeit through revised and/or 'new environmental land management schemes' (NELMS). The Basic Farm Payment (BFP) received by the majority of farmers will be phased out over a number of years. It will be replaced by a new scheme that offers 'public money for public goods'; that is, undertaking work on the farm to specifically benefit the environment, and hence the general public.
- 9.22. Grazing is a key component of managing the landscapes of the AONB, particularly its nationally important species-rich chalk grassland and habitats associated with water meadows. In the absence of a UK-EU trade deal after Brexit, farm exports will face World Trade Organisation tariffs. This will have a significant impact upon agriculture. Livestock farming could be one of the worse affected sectors, as tariffs could increase consumer prices by as much as 50%.³⁵ Consequently, the viability of grazing our grasslands and meadows may reduce. However, livestock numbers may not decrease as grazing regimes develop as a part of an arable rotation.
- 9.23. DEFRA has recently extended pilot schemes in Norfolk, Suffolk and Yorkshire and indicated that it needs further innovative tests and trials of new agri-environment methods / techniques to help achieve the aims of the 25 year Environment Plan and respond to the Health and Harmony consultation paper: 'The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a Green Brexit'.

³⁴ Responding to the impacts of climate change on the natural environment: Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase (NE116), Natural England, March 2009

³⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/52003?category=10003>
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/348/348.pdf>

9.24. DEFRA has stated³⁶ that in advance of withdrawing the BFP, trials will test potential options and techniques that will help protect, conserve and enhance the environment and biodiversity. Test and trials will look to:

- Restore healthy soils
- Improve air quality
- Provide clean water, and
- Enable the countryside to teem with wildlife

9.25. The AONB is in a strong position to play a positive role in developing these new environmental land management schemes based on landscape character, and at a landscape scale. It has considerable and proven experience working with, and facilitating, self-help farm clusters to enhance farmland wildlife, habitats and landscapes. The AONB is very keen to collaborate with landowners and farmers to help offer a clear collective voice to shape future policies and support schemes. The AONB could be a test-bed for revised support schemes and new ways of working, delivering public goods for public money, whilst producing quality local foods for the nation.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
NE A	Sustainable ecological networks are established and maintained across the AONB	NE1	Build and sustain a robust environmental records base for the AONB and its surrounds
		NE2	Develop biodiversity permeability/connectivity mapping across the AONB to identify restoration and enhancement priorities that integrate with landscape character.
		NE3	Work with landowners, farmers, woodland managers and appropriate partners, to establish and enhance coherent and effective ecological networks at a landscape-scale through the development of

³⁶ See Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, Cmd paper 9577, HMSO, February 2018

			further farm / woodland clusters or through new environmental land management scheme opportunities.
		NE4	Develop and seek resources to manage a long term programme of volunteer training and involvement in all aspects of environmental/countryside management
		NE5	Develop, and seek resources for, a programme of landscape scale biodiversity enhancement projects, to increase priority habitat within the AONB by 1,000ha over this plan period.
NE B	The benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	NE6	Develop a natural capital accounting system for the AONB with partners that will increase understanding and provide accurate and appropriate data for better decision-making within this AONB.
NE C	Everyone, particularly business and community leaders, have a better understanding of the potential effects of climate change in the AONB and the actions they can take.	NE7	Work with relevant organisations, such as Councils and the NFU, on climate change adaptation/mitigation measures and promote good practice examples that are appropriate for the AONB landscape and communities.
NE D	Pests, pathogens, and invasive non-native species causing harm in the AONB are being effectively addressed	NE8	Support partners and landowners to manage existing pests and pathogens, and increase understanding of the

			dangers from non-native species, pests and pathogens.
<i>(Additional Information: Natural Environment Appendix 29)</i>			

10. Historic and Cultural Environment

The way the land has been used over the centuries has influenced the character of the landscapes we see around us today. The remnants and artefacts of working life, together with the layout of settlements, routeways, and buildings, contribute to the historic character of an area. This includes buried archaeology, buildings, designed landscapes and cultural features. Many acclaimed writers, artists, poets and photographers are associated with this AONB.

10.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to the historic and cultural environment:

- A landscape etched with the imprint of the past - visible archaeological features including prehistoric earthworks, settlements, field systems, water meadows and former settlements.
- The former Medieval hunting areas of Selwood Forest, Grovely Forest, and the Cranborne Chase.
- A rich legacy of landscape scale prehistoric archaeological features such as the Neolithic Dorset Cursus, as well as later historic features including the Saxon Bokerley Dyke.
- Historic borderlands, with important Saxon and even Roman roots, once marginal land and often subject to late enclosure.
- A rich land use history, with areas that have a concentration of ancient enclosure, ancient woodland, and former common land.
- An historic settlement pattern (pre 1750), which has seen minimal infilling, associated with a dense concentration of historic listed buildings.
- A concentration of historic parklands, estates, and manor houses together with Historic Parks and Gardens of national and county importance.
- Literary, artistic and historic connections of national and international distinction.

Ambition

10.2. The historic and cultural environment of the AONB is conserved and enhanced. Everyone understands, values and enjoys its cultural and heritage assets. The story of the area's evolution over time is clear to all.

Key Achievements

- **Publications** - Historic England promotes our AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation 2008, and the subsequent Historic Environment Action Plans (HEAPs) 2012, as exemplar documents. These provide an

evolving targeted framework for ongoing historic environment action and a dedicated web site³⁷.

- **Volunteer engagement** – over thirty people have been trained to identify and record historic farmsteads.
- **Foundations of Archaeology** - This two year HLF funded project explored the legacy of the pioneers of archaeology who lived and worked in the AONB locality, training up over 200 volunteers, familiarising them with some of the basic skills of archaeological field survey. The project targeted sites known to have been excavated by antiquarians in three Focus Areas and work included condition surveys, management work and increased awareness of the historic wealth of the AONB. It also trained volunteers to contribute to the Historic Environment Record in Dorset and Wiltshire into the future.
- **Well attended conferences** - Conferences covering different aspects of the historic and archaeological treasures of the AONB, as well as the Foundation of Archaeology project, offered opportunities to hear well renowned speakers. Attendance was high.
- **Input to planning** - Consultation responses have influenced the drafting of national and local planning policy. Advice given to planning authorities on proposals affecting heritage assets has been effective.

Key issues

1. **Knowledge and subsequent appreciation of the historic environment remains low** - The AONB has a vast and precious historic heritage. Greater knowledge and promotion of this heritage legacy will underpin practical action to conserve and enhance it.
2. **Inappropriate management of the historic environment** - Ploughing, planting or unsuitable grazing can seriously damage historic sites and features.
3. **Heritage at Risk** - The AONB has heritage assets that Historic England considers to be vulnerable or 'at Risk'. There is a need for partners to take practical action to conserve and enhance these assets. There is a sparse record of historic farmsteads, especially those not recognised by the Listed Building processes.
4. **Funding for the historic environment** - Pressure on specific funds to safeguard and enhance the historic environment is acute. Much of the funding for this area of work is discretionary.
5. **Limited awareness of contribution of art, literature and folklore to local identity** - Heywood Sumner, Thomas Hardy, Desmond Hawkins, Cecil

Beaton, Lucien Freud and Elisabeth Frink all took inspiration from Cranborne Chase and its hinterland. There is a profusion of authors, broadcasters, musicians, sculptors, photographers and artists closely connected to the AONB, both in the past and today. For many, their work is either little known or not widely enough appreciated by resident and visitor communities.

The Issues Explained

- 10.3. Awareness of sources of information on historic resources is limited. There is a need to promote better awareness of HEAPS as a key source (while acknowledging that these often record some types of heritage better than others, so other sources should also be used). The 'Buildings at Risk' register of Historic England is not widely known nor its local relevance appreciated. There is not a record of all the historic sites. Those without records are almost certainly being damaged or lost. There is a need for greater knowledge of the location and importance of the heritage assets of the AONB. The ongoing promotion of the Historic Landscape Characterisation and HEAPS can help deal with this.
- 10.4. The Historic Environment Records (HERs) in Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire are an essential source of information for managing, caring for and understanding the historic environment. They select and present information on all known heritage assets. These include landscapes, buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and archaeological finds. There is also information on previous archaeological and heritage work in each county.
- 10.5. No such record is ever complete. The AONB Historic Environment Action Plan identifies ways in which the AONB can work with the HERs to enhance knowledge and understanding, for example for the Medieval and Post Medieval period and in woodland. It also identifies areas where the significance of particular heritage is not well known.
- 10.6. The quality of information about and interpretation of the historic environment of the AONB can be improved. There is a wealth of historic riches throughout the area; a visible legacy of human involvement with the landscape through time. In addition, there is poor knowledge and low appreciation of artists, writers and other cultural connections, both past and present. The aim of the HLF funded Cranborne Chase and the Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme is to support wide-ranging, innovative and inspiring interpretation. This will invite involvement, enjoyment and learning from the widest range of audiences throughout 2019-24, and on into the future. It will also provide a range of opportunities for these people to get involved in practical tasks; and to celebrate the historic and cultural heritage of the area.
- 10.7. Nevertheless, the AONB needs to access more resources to develop educational and interpretative media across the whole AONB to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of this AONB's historic and cultural environment.

- 10.8. The landscapes of the AONB are an expression of the interaction between people and the land over thousands of years. Every part of these landscapes has a history that contributes to the special qualities of the AONB. The landscapes of the AONB bear the mark of successive periods of human activity. This is one of the richest and most closely studied parts of prehistoric Wessex. It is the haunt of General Pitt-Rivers, Heywood Sumner, Richard Bradley and Martin Green. However, there is still much to be discovered.
- 10.9. Important literary figures associated with the area include poet and barrister Sir John Davies, naturalist and writer W H Hudson, and author and broadcaster Desmond Hawkins, amongst many. Thomas Hardy based some scenes of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in Cranborne Chase AONB. Other artistic and cultural connections include the architect Sir Christopher Wren and renowned photographer, designer, socialite, writer, Sir Cecil Beaton.
- 10.10. The work of Augustus John, Henry Lamb, Ben Nicholson, John Craxton, Lucian Freud, Stanley Spencer, Elisabeth Frink, William Nicholson and over 25 other artists connected with Cranborne Chase were celebrated as part of an exhibition at Salisbury Museum. The Museum states that artists 'have found in Cranborne Chase and its hinterland a landscape of inspiration, seclusion and 'bare-boned' beauty'; and that the AONB 'has always had an air of isolation which has attracted an exceptional array of artists and writers'. (*Appendix 30*)

Nationally designated heritage in the AONB

- 10.11. Designation is a way of marking that a building, monument or landscape is of 'special architectural or historic interest' in a national context. Historic England makes the recommendation for designation (*Appendix 17*). It is a stage that identifies a site as being architecturally or historically important before any planning stage that may decide its future. In the AONB there are:
- 550 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
 - 2038 Listed Buildings, 78 of which are Grade I and 106 Grade II*.
 - 17 Registered Parks and Gardens.
- 10.12. When Historic England says that a Listed Grade I or II* Building is 'at risk', they mean it is vulnerable through neglect or decay rather than alteration or demolition. This leads to the 'At Risk' Register. Historic England prepares and publishes an annual Register of Heritage at Risk of those nationally designated heritage assets that are at risk of being lost through neglect, decay or inappropriate development. In 2018 in the AONB there were:
- 5 Buildings at Risk
 - 81 Monuments at Risk
 - 0 Parks and Gardens at Risk
- 10.13. Some local authorities produce their own registers that record all buildings and structures 'at risk', irrespective of grade. As Historic England (formerly English Heritage) English Heritage only lists Grades I, II* and II in the Register of

Heritage at Risk, the total number of buildings or structures 'at risk' is much greater than the register might at first suggest.

Local heritage designations and records

- 63 designated Conservation Areas
- 16 Historic Parks and Gardens of county importance
- Historic designed landscapes of local importance
- The four county archaeological services record and protect the archaeology within the AONB, and each maintain an Historic Environment Record/Sites and Monuments Record

10.14. The Historic Environment Action Plans (HEAPS)³⁸ identify the key issues affecting the heritage assets of the AONB. They summarise the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale. They set out the significance, condition and pressures affecting the heritage assets, including those 'at risk'. They identify the actions needed to conserve and enhance these special characteristics. These provide the central actions to enable the AONB to effectively conserve and enhance its historic environment assets.

10.15. Ploughing the land can destroy buried and extant archaeological features. Lack of grazing leads to the development of scrub. Historic sites are harder to recognise when overgrown and are prone to severe damage if trees or shrubs establish themselves. Overgrazing can cause erosion and destroy sites. Burrowing animals, such as badgers and rabbits, can damage underground remains. Planting and harvesting trees and energy crops may also cause damage to sites. Badly designed buildings and structures may spoil the setting of many sites and monuments. The historic cohesion of the landscape may be lost.

Funding

10.16. Historic England commissioned a research report in 2011³⁹ to review the issues facing local authorities as they manage their heritage assets at a time of acute financial stress. The funding available through both Historic England and Local Authorities has greatly diminished over recent years. The research found a wide variation in the ways that local authorities manage their heritage properties. It describes the issues that are affecting them, including the economic downturn, declining budgets, changing patterns of use and fewer conservation officers.

10.17. Some external funding programmes target the historic environment. The Heritage Lottery fund is, however, currently (2018) reviewing its funding programmes. There is now intensive competition to all funding programmes

³⁸ http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk/conserving_heap.html

³⁹ English Heritage: Local authority heritage assets: Current issues and opportunities by Green Balance with Grover Lewis Associates Ltd March 2012.

which may lead to insufficient funding to fully protect and conserve the historic wealth of the AONB.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
HE A	The historic environment, cultural heritage and traditions of the AONB are understood, valued and celebrated	HE1	Promote the historic landscapes of the AONB, the Historic Landscape Characterisation, HEAP documents together with past and present cultural associations, as educational resources to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of the AONB's historic and cultural environment.
		HE2	Utilise resources available through the 5 year LPS to undertake volunteering activities, public events and provide creative educational and interpretative media based on the historic heritage of the AONB area.
HE B	The historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB is conserved and enhanced	HE3	Promote the Historic Landscape Characterisation and related Historic Landscape Character Areas and Themes descriptions as a tool for managing the historic and cultural environment of the AONB, providing a framework for policy-making, planning decisions, research agendas and positive action.
		HE4	Encourage appropriate and improved identification, recording and management of the distinctive historic landscapes of the AONB through working with appropriate partners including the County HERs, farmers and partners within the Landscape Partnership Scheme to undertake action identified in the AONB Historic Environment Action Plans.
		HE5	Facilitate future 'agri-environment' schemes that effectively enhance the management of historic sites and features.

	HE6	Work with relevant partners to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets 'at risk' within the AONB
	HE7	The AONB will normally only support 'enabling development' that seeks to secure the conservation or restoration of an historic feature if it is not at the expense of another historic feature or the setting of that historic feature or another ⁴⁰ .
	HE8	Encourage the appropriate reuse of redundant historic farm buildings in harmony with landscape character and local distinctiveness
	HE9	In relation to additions/alterations to the built heritage or nearby structures, support Local Planning Authority Conservation Officers in seeking the highest standards of design and materials.
<i>(Additional Information: Historic and Cultural Environment Appendix 30)⁴¹</i>		

⁴⁰ Green Balance with Grover Lewis Associates Ltd March 2012: Local authority heritage assets: Current issues and opportunities for English Heritage; also Historic England (2016): Managing Heritage Assets - A Guide for Local Government

⁴¹ Also, refer to English Heritage 2008-Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places.

11. Dark Night Skies

Cranborne Chase AONB has the darkest night skies in central southern England. The awe-inspiring Milky Way can be readily viewed here; something that over 90% of the UK population can rarely see due to light pollution. Unlike ancient historic settlements, rivers, soils, wildlife, and our outstanding landscapes, the night sky has no legal protection, which explains why in just six years light pollution has increased by 24% across the UK as a whole.

11.1. Special characteristics and qualities that makes this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to dark night skies:

- Cranborne Chase AONB is one of the darkest places in England⁴²
- Dark night skies with a myriad of visible stars have always been an outstanding, memorable and remarkable feature of this AONB
- A topography that facilitates stargazing with open, elevated downland, wide panoramic, unobstructed views all with relatively easy public access
- Lack of major towns and a low AONB population limits the incidence of light pollution and sky glow

Ambition

11.2. The Partnership aims to achieve International Dark Sky Reserve⁴³ status during 2019, continuing to reduce light pollution into the future to enhance further the night-time environment for the benefit of human health and wildlife. It will also reduce expenditure and carbon emissions from unnecessary lighting, and offering new opportunities for education and rural tourism.

Key achievements

- A **Light Pollution Position Statement** endorsed by AONB Partnership in 2008
- An objective to seek International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR) status was adopted by Partnership local authorities in the 2014-19 AONB Management Plan

⁴² The most detailed ever satellite maps of England's light pollution and dark skies, were released by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in 2016. They showed that 52% of Cranborne Chase AONB is in Band 1, which is the darkest category and 40% of the AONB is in the next category. See CPRE (June 2016) Night Blight: Mapping England's light pollution and dark skies.

⁴³ An IDA International Dark Sky Reserve protects an area possessing exceptional starry nights and nocturnal environment for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage and/or public enjoyment. Reserves consist of a core area meeting minimum criteria for sky quality and natural darkness, and a peripheral area that supports dark sky preservation in the core. Formation of reserves is through partnerships that recognize the value of the natural night time environment through regulations and long-term planning – after International Dark Sky association, see <http://darksky.org/idsp/reserves/>

- The prevention and avoidance of light pollution has been consistently inputted to national and local planning policy consultations and detailed development management advice since 2008
- The first specialist, dark night skies and good lighting **AONB Planning Seminar** was held in 2014, another in 2018 whilst an AONB Annual Forum was held in association with the coordinator for the BAA's Commission for Dark Skies (CfDS).
- **Good Lighting Guides** were provided by the AONB and CfDS in 2016, plus a Developers' Guide to Good Lighting in 2018
- Partnerships have been established with the British Astronomical Association (BAA) and Wessex Astronomical Society to record sky darkness, facilitate events, and promote good lighting practice. The Head of the British Astronomical Association's Commission for Dark Skies is giving wide ranging expert advice and support.
- **10 public stargazing sites** have been negotiated with landowners and promoted through this 'Chasing Stars' initiative.
- **Sky Quality Meter (SQM)** readings have been taken throughout the AONB since 2015 and on a more systematic square kilometre grid basis during 2017 to map the darkest areas of the AONB.
- Numerous public stargazing evenings have been held together with 'Space Detectives' workshops delivered to schools.
- Some LPAs now regularly place conditions on planning approvals that ensure new lighting complies with this AONB's guidance, which echoes CfDS and International Dark-sky Association (IDA) best practice.
- A **dedicated Dark Sky Advisor** post from August 2018 will focus on the task of attaining Reserve status.

Key issues

1. Exposure to artificial light at night presents significant risks to human health. Humans evolved with the rhythms of the natural light-dark cycle of day and night. Natural light helps set our clocks to Earth's 24-hour day-night cycle. Exposure to artificial light at night disrupts this process, increasing our risks for cancers and other potentially deadly diseases. Glare from poorly shielded outdoor lighting limits our ability to see. Aging eyes are especially affected⁴⁴.
2. Outdoor lighting impacts wildlife, especially in or near sensitive habitats. Bad lighting policies can have lethal consequences for wildlife but good policies can maintain healthy ecosystems. Nocturnal habitats do not receive the same attention as daytime habitats.
3. Producing artificial light consumes energy. Promoting dark skies can reduce energy consumption and promote efficient outdoor lighting technologies.

There is a need to influence the types and levels of outdoor lighting installed in the AONB.

4. Poorly designed and/or installed outdoor lighting is a hazard to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians in transit at night. The same policies that keep night-time skies dark reduce glare and put **the right amount of light in the right place and at the right time** to ensure the safety of all.
5. Over-lighting outdoor spaces at night can create favourable conditions for crimes of opportunity. Bright flood lighting creates shadows that can mask a crime. Policies that protect dark skies enhance security by reducing glare and preserving night-sight.
6. Dazzle, glare and light spilling in all directions reduces the visibility of the stars and hence the opportunities to perceive a special part of the universe.
7. Awareness and understanding of the implications of seeking IDSR status needs to be raised. People living and working in the AONB need to be a part of this initiative. Although large parts of the area remain free from light pollution, the gradual encroachment of street, house and security lights means that starlight, which may have travelled for hundreds or even millions of years to reach our eyes, is stolen at the last moment - by sky-glow. The ongoing information and engagement programme aims to reach a consensus for limits and controls on outside lighting.
8. An absence of detailed lighting policies within current Local/Development Plans can be a barrier for LPAs implementing good lighting practice when determining planning applications. However, some lighting issues (Permitted Development / installation of blinds) fall outside planning control.
9. Planning consultants and developers need to adopt good lighting practices as standard.
10. The significant potential to attract and increase additional astro-tourism visitors to this AONB, particularly in the 'shoulder' and winter months, is not fully appreciated

The Issues Explained

- 11.3. Whilst awareness and understanding of the multiple benefits of IDSR status is increasing, the potential improvements to human health, an enhanced environment for nocturnal wildlife, financial savings, carbon emission reductions and a much enhanced tourism offer requires ongoing promotion.
- 11.4. The advent of LEDs, which offer welcome and considerable cost and energy savings to domestic and business users, emit a harsh, bright white light that can often dazzle onlookers, and if fixtures are incorrectly fitted, emit this unnecessary light upwards and sideways
- 11.5. Some of the LPAs are including conditions regarding lighting issues in line with the AONBs policies on lighting and others have yet to put this in motion. The

Local/Development Plans for the seven Local Authorities cover different time periods. This means some may be willing to consider adding specific lighting policies relatively quickly whilst others suggest they are not in a position to do so for some time.

- 11.6. The highway authorities in Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire each operate light dimming schemes. Dorset has a highway policy of no lights in rural areas except in special situations (for example, at major traffic junctions) and a policy that restricts upwards and sideways emission of light.
- 11.7. Many planning consultants and developers are unaware of the light pollution caused through ill-designed lighting schemes. The Institution of Lighting Professionals has developed guidance dedicated solely to excellence in lighting that requires promotion that is more comprehensive.
- 11.8. Plans for new developments frequently comprise floor to ceiling glass ‘walls’, and roof lights are not automatically fitted with blinds or louvres; understanding of the need for these to prevent night-time emission of light needs to be increased.
- 11.9. IDA requires <500 lumens (equating roughly to a 60W bulb), or fully shielded fittings preferably incorporating an infra-red motion sensor to limit sideways and upwards light spill in a Dark Sky Reserve. Much of the outside, security lighting utilised on both domestic and business premises is not currently IDA compliant, with many unshielded fittings and lamps/bulbs emitting higher than the required 500 lumens.
- 11.10. Another factor contributing to unwanted light spill can be the inappropriate installation of light fixtures. They should be angled downwards to only light the area to be illuminated. This requires fixtures to only shine light below the horizontal. The AONB is developing a ‘Big Dipper’ type campaign to turn downwards existing light units and to encourage correct installation of light fixtures.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
DNS A	International Dark-Sky Reserve (IDSR) status is secured for the AONB during 2019	DNS1	Actively promote the benefits of IDSR status to all partners and communities to elicit appropriate action and support for the application to IDA.
DNS B	The IDSR status is retained through evidencing annual reductions in light pollution across the AONB	DNS2	Work with all LPA partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain IDSR status through continuous improvements to lighting/retrofitting schemes

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embed good practice lighting guidance within their Local/Development Plans • Ensure substantial lighting schemes, such as those for schools, businesses and sports areas, are competently designed and meet DNS and other environmental criteria • submit an annual report of activities to maintain the IDSR status
		DNS3	Support parish councils in promoting good practice lighting to their residents and businesses, offering Dark Sky Friendly Parish Award
		DNS4	Investigate the potential for sponsorship/provision of low cost good practice outside light fittings within the AONB
DNS C	The multiple benefits of dark night skies are understood, valued and enjoyed by all	DNS5	Work with other UK 'Dark Sky Places' and related organisations to improve awareness and understanding across the country of the need to reduce light pollution
DNS D	The AONB, tourism and related businesses jointly promote, and benefit from, the AONB as a prime destination for stargazing holidays	DNS6	Develop a Dark-Sky Friendly Accreditation Scheme for local tourism and allied businesses
DNSE	An AONB observatory offers regular stargazing activities together with educational and study opportunities for residents, visitors and schools	DNS7	Determine a potential location, design criteria and funding requirements necessary to establish an AONB Observatory within the timeframe of this Plan

LIVING AND WORKING LANDSCAPES

12. Rural Land Management

Rural land management encompasses farming, forestry, fisheries and game management. In this deeply rural AONB, landowners and managers have been the custodians and sculptors of the landscape for centuries. Today and tomorrow, their activities will continue to shape and mould the landscapes we see around us. They will deliver the food we need; they will help with the supply of clean air and water; they will offer recreational opportunities.

- 12.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to rural land management:
- The agricultural character of the AONB is typified by arable cropping, especially the south-eastern sector and on the West Wiltshire Downs.
 - There are several large estates within the AONB resulting in consistent agricultural regimes over large areas over time.
 - The Vale of Wardour and the north-western edge of the area are mostly grasslands.
 - A typical AONB farm is slightly larger than the regional average and consists of predominantly arable land with some permanent pasture and woodland. It is the mixed nature of the holdings that contributes significantly to the special qualities of the landscape and its biodiversity.
 - The mosaic of broad-leaved, mixed and coniferous woodland, shelterbelts, copses, hedgerows and veteran trees is a distinctive element in the AONB landscape.
 - The AONB is one of the most intensively managed game landscapes in the country. This reflects the heritage of the area as a Chase and the character of the downlands. Historically there were early cereal crops making way for early season partridge shooting. Much of the focus is now on pheasant shooting which contributes to the social and economic development of rural businesses and communities.
 - The legacy of previous land management adds to the historic dimension of the landscape.

Ambition

- 12.2. The management of the rural land of this AONB will be sustainable. This will meet the demand for food, fuel and other produce in ways that conserve and enhance the landscape character of the AONB and deliver increased public benefits.

Key Achievements

- **‘Raising Our Game’** - Production of the first integrated landscape management advice for game managers in a protected landscape. Research conducted with game managers by the AONB with analysis by The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust.
- **‘A Landscape View of Trees and Woodland’** - Guidelines for tree planting for each landscape character type within the AONB.
- **Co-ordinated Wood Fuel Initiative (2007-2009)** - This was undertaken jointly with Protected Areas in South West England. It included distribution of a wood fuel information and questionnaire leaflet, two demonstration projects and two practical seminar events attended by 50 interested parties. A Wood Fuel Fayre attracted 150 attendees.
- **Biennial Cranborne Chase Woodfair (2007-2015)** - This major event attracted around 7,000 visitors over a weekend. It very successfully acted as a showcase for the AONB and its woodland management, woodland owners, crafts people and allied industries.
- A woodland owners and managers seminar, **‘Make Woodland Work’** was held jointly with the North Wessex Downs AONB in April 2017, attracting over 30 participants. Workshops focussed on the economic and practical problems of the management of small-scale and/or undermanaged woodland, potential markets and how to optimise timber sales.
- A joint consultation response was prepared with Dorset AONB on the Forestry Commissions **Draft Forest Plan** for woodlands of Cranborne Chase and North Dorset 2016-2026.
- **South Wiltshire Farmland Bird Project (2009-2015)** - Cranborne Chase AONB hosted the project officer who gave one to one advice to 147 farmers on creating and managing essential year-round habitat for the six most threatened farmland bird species (see Natural Environment Chapter). An outcome was the creation of over 1000ha of new habitat, mainly through the Natural England’s Environmental Stewardship Scheme. In 2015, the project won the Bowland Award, awarded annually for the best project, best practice, or outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by the National Association of AONBs.
- **Farm Conservation Project – 2015 onwards.** The main component of the Farm Conservation Project (developed from the farmland bird project) involves bringing together groups of neighbouring farmers in groups or ‘clusters’. Within the Farm Conservation Project Area, there are currently three established farmer clusters. They surround Martin Down National

Nature Reserve to form a 'supercluster' and represent over 30,000ha of land in total. Thirteen farms in the Wylde Valley make up a new cluster, covering an area of 8000ha of farmland from Sutton Veny to Steeple Langford. The Farm Conservation Adviser also works with farmers submitting applications to Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

- **Land managers seminars** - The AONB held land managers' seminars that focused on topics of current interest such as species protection in the farmed landscape and game management in a protected landscape.

Key issues

1. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union has steered agriculture for decades. The decision to leave the EU means CAP will no longer govern the agricultural industry. The Government's 25 year Environment Plan and ministerial commitment that public money (to agriculture) must produce public goods (environmental gains) create huge environmental opportunities. In the transition to a new agri-environment regime, there are opportunities to test options that restore soil health, produce healthy food, conserve wildlife, sustain clear air and clean water, and enhance landscapes within sustainable farming.
2. To ensure the sustainable management of the AONB's rural land, it is essential that farmers are encouraged to adopt good environmental and agricultural practices. Then the nation can achieve the aims of improved soils, more wildlife, and sustainable food production.
3. The area once had a thriving dairy industry but the number of dairies has declined. Cattle and sheep numbers however have remained steady over the past decade whilst pig figures show a drastic reduction from 48,000 to 13,000. The shelters associated with extensive pig rearing can have a detrimental visual impact in our open landscape areas.
4. Many woodlands are either under-managed or do not have a coherent management plan. The wood-fuel market continues to offer an opportunity to bring more small woodlands into positive management.
5. The AONB is one of the most intensively managed game landscapes in the country and the effects of this are not fully appreciated and valued. This sector can create significant social, environmental and economic benefits but, if poorly managed, can have negative impacts.
6. The impact of pests (and particularly pest and wildlife management) is a major issue for forest managers, landowners and nature conservationists. There is an increase in the number of alien species, pests and pathogens entering the natural environment, with many being recorded almost monthly. In May 2018, the Forestry Commission noted 30 new pests and diseases affecting

livestock, and 15 affecting trees in the UK.⁴⁵ These can have a devastating effect on the natural environment and livelihoods.

7. The rivers of the AONB, particularly in the catchment of the Hampshire Avon, are some of the finest trout streams in the world, valued highly by fishermen. However, climate change and other factors threaten this heritage and the benefits that flow from it. Water flows in rivers and streams could become more erratic; or too much water can be abstracted. In addition, diffuse pollution occurs through poor land management practices, reducing water quality.

The Issues Explained

- 12.3. Farmland covers over 86% of the AONB; together with woodland cover this rises to 96%⁴⁶. The landscapes we cherish are the result of the interactions of nature and human activities over centuries. The stewardship of land managers over past generations, and the commitment of many today, is critical to sustaining, and enhancing, these landscapes in to the future.
- 12.4. European farming grant schemes have been the largest single public investment in the AONB to date. However, past stewardship payments did not reflect the profitability of arable farming, resulting in some farmers terminating their agreements prematurely or not partaking at all.
- 12.5. The current uptake of environmental stewardship schemes within the AONB is nonetheless above the national average with 44% of the 'utilisable agricultural area' under Environmental Stewardship Schemes. The 152 agreements in place in the AONB cover over 34,000 hectares.
- 12.6. The UK will formally leave the European Union (EU) in March 2019. The government anticipates that we will agree, with the EU, an implementation period for the whole country lasting for another 21 months. There will be an additional 'agricultural transition' period in England. This will give farmers time to prepare for new trading relationships and environmental land management systems.
- 12.7. From 2022 onwards, a new environmental land management system will be the cornerstone of the UK agricultural policy, achieving improved biodiversity, water, air quality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and cultural benefits that improve our mental and physical well-being and the safeguarding of the historic landscapes.
- 12.8. The new environmental land management scheme(s) (NELMS) will be underpinned by payment of 'public money for the provision of public goods'. In 2015, UK farmers received £2.4b in direct payments (Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)) and the total to be directed to NELMS remains unclear. While environmental enhancement and protection are of key importance, better

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<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/geography/our-research/ecss/webber11.pdf>

⁴⁶

Natural England (2014), Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes, NE 31 March 2014

animal and plant health, animal welfare, improved public access, rural resilience and productivity are also areas where farmers and land managers may need support in the future.

12.9. The AONB designation provides a platform for integrating the support provided to the sector with wider environmental, social and economic opportunities. In doing so, AONBs could be vital test beds in helping develop a more sustainable approach to agriculture in England

12.10. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan focuses on using and managing land sustainably, recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes and connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing. It also commits to undertaking a review of National Parks and AONBs. The review, led by Julian Glover, will report on the options for improving access to AONBs, and on the support needed by those who live and work in them. It will also explore the role these designations have in growing the rural economy.

12.11. There are many practices that can be adopted by farmers that will bring environmental and commercial benefits, such as:

- sustainable utilisation of soil, minimising erosion;
- effective water catchment management;
- avoidance of direct pollution and measures to reduce diffuse pollution;
- farm waste minimisation and recycling.

National and local policies must support and encourage farmers in making decisions that bring these “win-win” solutions to the challenges of the future.

12.12. As part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, there are plans for bringing woodland owners together to work collectively, as with the farm clusters, managing their holdings more effectively and finding new markets for the timber. Creating local wood-fuel supply chains was one of the top five recommendations in a review of the business opportunities that arise from valuing nature correctly⁴⁷. Businesses using the wood fuel may enjoy reduced costs with local and secure fuel supplies. They may also benefit from the Renewable Heat Incentive. There may be marketing benefits for some companies from using green energy. The report identifies the main barrier to be a lack of confidence in the long-term consistency of the supply chain preventing demand. This lack of demand then holds back the confidence to increase the supply. There is a need for technical support and training to ensure managing woodland for fuel is undertaken sustainably. The need is to develop local cooperatives surrounded by groups of users. This will help link local supply chains.

12.13. Indications are that the market is improving for timber sales (Forestry Commission 2018). There may be opportunities for woodland extensions or creation, appropriate to the relevant landscape character. With the increasing

⁴⁷ 'Realising nature's value: The Final Report of the Ecosystem Markets Task Force'. March 2013
www.defra.gov.uk/ecosystem-markets/files/Ecosystem-Markets-Task-Force-Final-Report-.pdf

incidence of pests and diseases, landowners may need to be flexible in considering the species chosen for planting schemes.

- 12.14. The research for 'Raising Our Game' document (2011) highlighted the importance of game shooting as a reason for acquiring, retaining and managing land. It has a significant effect on the local economy. In 2011 game management provided significant employment and housing, 30.5 full-time equivalents in our sample of 42 shoots. The game sector of the AONB is at least as robust as in 2011, if not stronger. It attracts large numbers of day and weekend visitors to the AONB and supports a significant hospitality service outside of the main tourist season.
- 12.15. There are approximately 120 shoots in the AONB. Many are of modest size whilst a few shoots are larger concerns with the turnover of a medium-sized company.
- 12.16. A significant proportion of the River Avon System is within the AONB. It holds two Natura 2000 sites; the Hampshire Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Avon Valley Special Protection Area (SPA). The Hampshire Avon is one of four demonstration test catchments in England, a Government-funded project designed to study how to control diffuse pollution from agriculture to improve and maintain water quality in rural river catchments areas.
- 12.17. There has already been much good work undertaken such as the river restoration work of the Wessex Chalk Streams Project. Additionally, the Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust continues to be very active in its river restoration work delivering innumerable benefits to water quality and conservation. Much more remains to be achieved however, if our world-class fisheries are to be sustainable in the face of climate change and other challenges.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
RLM A	Land managers are aware of how their activities can impact on the landscape and environment of the AONB	RLM 1	Offer AONB focused landscape and land management training, as appropriate.
RLM B	Farmers, foresters, game and fishery managers actively assist in conserving and enhancing the landscape and	RLM2	Work closely with all relevant stakeholders, particularly farmers and Defra, to design New Environmental Land Management Scheme opportunities that will conserve

environment of the AONB through their business operations		and enhance the landscapes of the AONB
	RLM3	Offer Cranborne Chase AONB focused land management advice to support and encourage the formation of further farm clusters throughout the AONB
	RLM4	Support and encourage appropriate woodland management, encouraging skills training, reconnecting supply chains and increasing biodiversity, including PAWS restoration.
	RLM5	Work with partners, such as the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, to disseminate appropriate information and advice on how game management practices can positively contribute to AONB purposes and collaborate in further research to this end.
	RLM6	Identify good agricultural practices that are appropriate to the challenges facing the farmers of the AONB and disseminate through networks, partnerships and training.
	RLM7	Work with, and support partners such as the Environment Agency, private land owners, fishery managers, Trusts and Natural England, to deliver programmes and projects that bring environmental benefits to catchments while securing a viable future for fisheries.

(Additional Information: Rural Land Management Appendix 31)

13. Planning and Transport

Land use and development topics are inherently central to 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape'. The planning functions of the AONB Partnership, including transport matters, naturally interlink very closely with landscape and rural economy issues. The Government's 25 year Environment Plan (2018) emphasises embedding the principle of 'environmental net gain' for developments, including housing and infrastructure, locally and nationally. That embraces choosing the right places for development, avoiding environmental damage, protecting natural capital, and building to high environmental standards.

13.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to planning and transport:

- Organisationally complex; there are currently seven Local Planning Authorities, four Highways Authorities together with Highways England, and Network Rail.
- A largely rural, open, and undeveloped area comprising landscapes sensitive to change.
- Predominantly agricultural land uses but with an unusually high proportion of woodlands and forestry in parts.
- Landscapes of considerable scenic beauty, with extensive views, and hosting important habitats and species.
- The landscapes are rich in history with significant visual and archaeological features.
- Distinctive settlement patterns with historic elements readily visible and central to the character of settlements.
- Architectural styles vary considerably throughout the AONB, dependent on availability of building materials.
- The built environment forms an integral part of local character and distinctiveness and adds to the diversity of the AONB landscape as a whole.
- Large historic country houses at the centre of historic parklands and gardens and other characteristic buildings.
- Two separate railways converge through this AONB on Salisbury but only a single station within the AONB.
- Limited public transport and special buses needed to get students to schools.
- A single north – south main road route and four roughly east – west roads, two of them Trunk Roads.
- A minor road network that reflects the deeply rural, tranquil character of the

AONB, with few realignments and improvements.

- One of the darkest skies in southern central England that needs comprehensive lighting regulations to allow the stars to be seen by future generations.

Ambition

- 13.2. Planning and transportation strategies, policies, and decisions that affect this nationally important AONB both conserve and enhance its special qualities. Where development is necessary, it is located and designed to integrate fully with the landscape character and natural beauty.
- 13.3. All management of, and improvements to, roads enhance the distinctive character of the area. There will be a range of more sustainable options for transport that reduce its effects on tranquillity and the natural environment of the AONB.

Key Achievements

- **Planning Protocol** - All local planning authorities signed the planning protocol in 2005 (Appendix 19). It was refined in September 2006. The AONB is a consultee on Local Plan / Core Strategy documents as well as Minerals and Waste Plans. All planning applications over a certain size, or any applications that may have an adverse impact on the AONB, are sent to the Partnership for comment.
- **National Policies** – Both independently and in combination with other AONBs, the Partnership has contributed to, and influenced, 12 national policy consultations since 2004.
- **Guidance Documents** – The Partnership has produced nine AONB Position Statements, and ten Fact Sheets and Good Practice Notes (*See Appendix 20*). They provide information on topics of relevance to the landscape and planning within and around the AONB. Their purpose is to guide applicants, communities and planning officers.
- **Planning policy and applications** - Since 2006, Local Planning Authorities have received relevant AONB information in response to 247 policy documents and 1800 planning applications. This input enabled them to take proper account of the AONB and its setting.
- **Appeals and Inquiries** - The Partnership has provided 38 planning appeal responses to the Inspectorate since 2006; given evidence at major appeal Inquiries securing successful outcomes for the AONB and its setting; and contributed to future strategies at five Plan Examinations in Public.
- **Planning and Transportation Seminars** - There have been twelve annual seminars since 2005 with, on average, over thirty delegates at each. Focusing on a topic relevant to the time, these seminars are highly valued as continuing professional development.
- **Mitigation of Major Development** – To compensate for the unquantifiable

disruptions to the landscapes and tranquillity of the AONB due to the installation of their strategic water main across the AONB, Wessex Water provided funding to the AONB's farm conservation activities for 5 years.

- **Section 85 leaflet** – Provides guidance on the 'duty of regard' for the purposes of AONB designation for public bodies, organisations, and persons in public office. It is an example of good practice in Natural England's advice on the topic.
- **Landscape Character** –The Historic Landscape Character Assessment, the Historic Environment Action Plans and the detailed Landscape Character Assessment for the Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme area supplements the Landscape Character Assessment. Planning staff have been offered specific training to enable them to incorporate landscape matters into their work and decisions.
- **Landscape Sensitivity** - This seminal study (2007) of the inherent sensitivity and robustness of the landscapes of the AONB continues to guide and inform decision making.
- **Tranquillity** - The team has taken forward the CPRE data, supplemented by field surveys, to relate the findings more precisely to the landscape character areas of this AONB. Our work has been presented as good practice internationally as well as being taken as the basis for further work in two National Parks.
- **A Guide to Conserving and Enhancing the Setting of the Rural Road Network of the AONB** – Acutely aware that the public most frequently perceive the landscapes around them from roads, this document provides guidance on the landscape management of the highway corridors across the AONB.

Key issues

1. **Development pressures** – There are frequent proposals for renewable energy generation, waste treatment, large-scale agricultural storage and general warehousing and distribution. There is an inconsistent approach to replacement dwellings and additional 'essential worker' dwellings across the AONB; and a shortage of affordable housing for local people⁴⁸. The annual requirement on Local Planning Authorities to invite the identification of housing sites, along with the current round of Core Strategy / Local Plan consultations, can encourage speculative market housing proposals from landowners or developers. Neighbourhood Plan groups feel under pressure to identify development sites. Proposals for replacement dwellings are leading to a higher proportion of larger, less affordable, dwellings.
2. **Sustainability** – There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the National Planning Policy Framework. However, awareness and

understanding of the exception in the case of AONBs⁴⁹ needs to be raised. At a more detailed level, developers appear reluctant to provide appropriate renewable energy generation and adequate storage space for recycling in domestic and commercial, new build and extension situations.

3. **Diversification** – Diversification on a farm can help the local rural economy, particularly if this puts redundant farm buildings to a good use. However, the new use must be right for the AONB and its setting. Increasingly, proposals are coming forward that are not apt. This can relate to an increase in traffic and loss of tranquillity as well as changes to form, scale and appearance that affect the special qualities of the AONB.
4. **Transport** - Effective and frequent public transport for an extensive area with a low population is prohibitively expensive. The result is that buses are few and private vehicle ownership is high. There is a shortage of affordable parking at transport nodes to facilitate greater use of public transport. A lack of stations on the two railways through the AONB means they are an underutilised resource.
5. **Roads** - Highway management and maintenance does not always reflect the special characteristics of the AONB. The routing of freight traffic through the AONB has a negative effect on tranquillity.
6. **Lighting nuisance** – National data shows the general loss of dark night skies and the risk of light pollution encroaching on the dark skies of the AONB⁵⁰. Poorly directed or excessive lighting can cause sky-glow. This reduces the ability to see and enjoy the night-sky. The Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, makes it possible to deem artificial light emitted from premises to be a statutory nuisance under certain conditions. However, this is only relevant regarding light as a nuisance to a particular household(s). Much stronger, wide ranging lighting policies are required. Some of the Local Planning Authorities include conditions in planning consents regarding lighting issues in line with this AONB's policies on lighting, others have yet to put this in motion. (See also Chapter 11 Dark Night Skies)
7. **Uncertainty** – The government has recently issued a revised NPPF but the implementation and interpretation of it have yet to be tested.
8. Government has issued its 25 year Environment Plan, which appears to put greater emphasis on conserving and enhancing the natural environment nationwide. Government is also embarking on a review of English National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, government sees a need to build hundreds of thousands more houses in England. The state of

⁴⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework, HMSO, July 2018 – paragraph 11 (and footnote 6)

⁵⁰ National Framework Data sheet PLNB9 2013: based on National Tranquillity Mapping Data 2006 developed for the Campaign to Protect Rural England and Natural England by the University of Northumbria. OS Licence number 100018881.

the national economy following the referendum on leaving the European Union, and the protracted exit negotiations, add further uncertainty.

The Issues Explained

- 13.4. Seven local authorities are responsible for planning policy, transport policy, development management decisions, and enforcement within the AONB. The AONB team supplies specialist professional expertise and informed advice and judgements to the LPAs. Neighbourhood Plans, explained in paragraph 5.31 can refine the policy details for a parish or group of parishes. Planning authorities, and their Planning Committees, are under a legal duty to have regard to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB⁵¹. They also have the permissive power to take all such action they need to in order to accomplish this⁵². In terms of land-use planning this requires two principal actions. Firstly, there must be consistent and coherent policies in place to achieve the purpose. Secondly, there must be understanding and timely use of these policies. One role of the AONB Partnership is to share good practice.
- 13.5. Applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (Appendix 7) does not change the legal status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision-making. At the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development although restrictive policies apply to AONBs, Green Belts, SSSIs, and similar designations.
- 13.6. The reviewed National Planning Policy Framework continues to instruct local planning authorities to make a distinction between Protected Areas and 'other' countryside⁵³. In an AONB, **great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty** (*Appendix 21*). Planning permission should be refused for 'major developments' (*Appendix 22*), except in exceptional circumstances; and only where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. All relevant local planning policy must distinguish between this AONB and non-designated countryside. NPPF paragraphs 174 and 175 seek net biodiversity gains in plans and planning decisions; a similar approach to landscapes should apply in the AONB.
- 13.7. Despite the weight given to AONB matters in the NPPF there is a tendency for LPAs to give particular weight to the views of statutory consultees in both policy formulation and development management decisions. The Government's review of English AONBs and National Parks currently provides an opportunity to promote, at the national level, that AONB partnerships should be statutory consultees for all planning and transportation matters affecting their area or its setting.

⁵¹ The duty is set out the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: section 85

⁵² and the permissive power for planning authorities is in section 84(4)

⁵³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework, HMSO, July 2018- paragraphs 11 (and footnote 6), 170 & 172

Development Pressures

- 13.8. The need for development proposals both to conserve and enhance natural beauty in the AONB is not fully recognised or implemented. Despite the NPPF stating that 'great weight' should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, decision makers have a range of guidance to take into account. When judging the merits of applications, it should be borne in mind that an AONB has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
- 13.9. Development proposals need to be in appropriate locations and of an appropriate form, scale, and materials. This will enable them to integrate with landscape character both within and adjacent to the AONB. All Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs) should, from an AONB perspective, include Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) to demonstrate that potential landscape impacts, including both location and integration within the landscape, have been taken into account.
- 13.10. The sense of place is easily lost. Suburbanisation and the cumulative effect of 'permitted development' can break down local distinctiveness. Replacing small-scale, locally distinct features with ones of a standard design erodes local character.
- 13.11. There are repeated, and occasionally temporary, changes to the General Development Order (*Appendix 23*) extending Permitted Development Rights⁵⁴. This can potentially lead to increases in traffic and changes to the appearance of buildings and land.
- 13.12. The cumulative effect of larger replacement dwellings is twofold; it changes the character of the locality and it reduces the supply of smaller, potentially more affordable, dwellings. The latter exacerbates a serious social issue, and the former may impact adversely on the 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty' criteria.
- 13.13. The four County Councils produce Minerals and Waste Local Plans.
- Whilst there is generally very little mineral extraction from within this AONB, there is a long history of providing locally distinctive building materials. This is mainly from greensand and sandy limestone (Chilmark stone). The need to safeguard local identity and distinctiveness by using local materials is understood. This strengthens the local vernacular. However, there is a need to take account of the potential disruption, visual and other impacts resulting from the extraction of materials to achieve this.
 - AONBs have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. In October 2016, the Partnership endorsed the **principle**

⁵⁴ The current General Development Order came into operation in 2015 but it was amended in 2016 (twice), in 2017 (twice) and in 2018.

that such landscapes are not places for the importation of waste for treatment, processing, or disposal.

- 13.14. Developments in the setting of the AONB can also have significant impacts on the area. Their consideration must be in relation to the purposes of designation. Construction of high or expansive structures, other development, or any change generating movement, noise, odour, vibration or dust over a wide area will affect the setting. As our appreciation of the relationships between neighbouring landscapes grows, so too does our understanding of what constitutes the setting.
- 13.15. Planning applications for development proposals within this AONB or its setting all too often do not demonstrate an understanding of the importance of supplying all the relevant information. To assist applicants in making their applications the Partnership has endorsed (6 April 2016) a Position Statement on 'Good enough to approve in an AONB'.

Sustainability

- 13.16. There is continuing pressure to erect wind turbines and telecommunication masts in the AONB or its setting. These are very tall or substantial structures. They can detract from scenic beauty within the AONB and impair significant views to or from it. Similarly, extensive farm scale photo-voltaic arrays reduce the area of productive farmland. These types of developments can introduce a sense of 'industrialisation' into an otherwise unspoilt or tranquil landscape. They are frequently visually intrusive and fail to harmonise with the scale and character of the area. The AONB Partnership has produced a Position Statement on Renewable Energy, and one on Field Scale PVs.
- 13.17. Recycling storage space, composting areas, and roof based PV installations should be integral to the design of all new build, extensions and conversions.
- 13.18. The government has yet to clarify what it means by 'net environmental gain' from development. However, embedding that idea into the planning processes should help achieve the 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty' AONB criteria.
- 13.19. This AONB appears, from house price surveys⁵⁵, to add a significant premium to property prices. It therefore seems appropriate that such properties, when constructed or extended, should contribute to the management of the high quality landscapes that are enhancing their values. The Community Infrastructure Levy CIL) (*Appendix 24*) is a mechanism that could allow a contribution towards AONB management, however this has not happened. Nevertheless, planning authorities have to have regard to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB⁵⁶. In addition, they have the power

⁵⁵ Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology, Table 5; Wiltshire Council, Sept 2011 and research by Savills at <http://www.savills.co.uk/blog/article/200876/residential-property/the-value-of-our-natural-heritage-in-property.aspx>

⁵⁶ The duty is set out the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: section 85

to take all such action they need to in order to accomplish this⁵⁷. There needs to be a consistent but effective approach across the AONB that delivers a high quality landscape at a fair cost to all who benefit. One way would be for the Local Planning Authorities to show how their use of CIL meets their duty to conserve and enhance the AONB. The chapter on Sustainable Communities considers the setting of a separate Developer Contributions scheme to direct a proportion of the enhanced value to conserving and sustaining the character, qualities, and landscapes of the AONB.

Farm diversification

- 13.20. Some farm diversification proposals risk industrialisation of the countryside and a loss of tranquillity. There is potential for AONB locations to be viewed as cheap options for activities that should be located in a business park close to where potential employees live and outside the AONB e.g. waste processing or treatment.
- 13.21. The Partnership supports the diversification and re-use of redundant rural buildings for economic activities where it sustains the local economy and benefits the communities of the AONB. It must, of course, conserve and enhance natural beauty. An example is composting and anaerobic digestion. Local schemes that minimise transportation can fit with the AONB purposes. To do so they must comply with the three elements of 'from the farm, on the farm, for the farm'. Such schemes are not apt if the materials are not local; if processing is not at source; and if the product is not used on site. The Partnership has endorsed a Position Statement on Farm Diversification.

Roads and Transport

- 13.22. Most people see and appreciate the landscape from roads. The highway corridor often echoes the adjacent landscapes. Both of these factors are particularly important in AONBs. Therefore, the highway environment warrants special attention to reflect and sustain the special qualities and characteristics of the AONB. The effects of transport in the AONB are managed through the policies and programmes in the Local Transport Plans of the highway authorities, and the programmes of Highways England. These plans aim to:
- improve access to key services;
 - integrate transport provision and infrastructure improvements; and
 - promote sustainable forms of transport.
- 13.23. The AONB has four A-roads running east to west (A354, A30, A303, A36) and one (A350) running north to south on its western edge. The A303 and A36 are trunk roads managed by Highways England. On B and C roads, 'rat runs' develop avoiding the busy A roads. Heavy vehicles and traffic flows on these more rural roads, especially through daily commuting, can cause congestion,

⁵⁷ and the permissive power for planning authorities is in section 84(4)

pollution and loss of character and tranquillity; and damage to verges, the roads themselves, and buildings.

- 13.24. Road design that does not consider the special qualities of the landscape can harm the character of the AONB. Road safety will always be a prime concern but that does not preclude sensitive design of schemes and street furniture. Traffic management schemes, usually involving reduced speed limits, have the potential to urbanise rural situations and have not reduced the daily ‘rat runs’ caused by those avoiding A-road congestion. The safety of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders remains an issue in the AONB.
- 13.25. There is little incentive to use public transport. There are infrequent bus services and just one rail station in the AONB, with parking limited and costly. The use of public transport would increase if there were better and affordable parking facilities near-by. Village ‘hubs’ could be created to provide parking, easy access to public transport and village facilities. This merits further research.

Lighting Nuisance

- 13.26. In order to secure International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR) status, there must be a comprehensive Lighting Management Plan in place within the reserve. This will set criteria to limit the upwards and sideways emission from external lighting for private and public landowners within that area. An absence of detailed lighting policies within current Local/Development Plans is a hindrance to implementing good lighting practice when determining planning applications. The Local/Development Plans for the nine Local Authorities cover different time-periods. This means some may be willing to consider adding specific lighting policies relatively quickly whilst others suggest they are not in a position to do so for some time. (See also Chapter 11 Dark Night Skies)

Objectives and Policies⁵⁸

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
PT A	The AONB inputs effectively to national, regional and local strategies, policies and plans	PT1	Ensure the purposes and objectives of AONB designation are fully recognised in the development and implementation of Core Strategies/Local Plans,

⁵⁸

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework, HMSO, July 2018. Paragraph 170: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment

			Local Transport Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Green Infrastructure Plans and other public policies, strategies and programmes.
		PT2	Encourage, and contribute to, coherent and consistent formulation and implementation of planning policies, including across Local Authority boundaries, to ensure they take full account of the local distinctiveness, character, and quality of the AONB and its setting.
		PT3	Strongly advocate at national levels for initiatives to ensure AONBs are statutory consultees on all planning and transportation matters affecting their area and its setting.
		PT4	Encourage, support and inspire local communities to prepare and adopt Neighbourhood Plans and other similar initiatives, such as Village Design Statements, that respect the special landscapes of the AONB and the objectives of this Management Plan.
		PT5	Encourage and assist local communities to identify local needs /

			environmental projects that help offset impacts of development, conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness, and utilise the Neighbourhood proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy.
PT B	Strategic and local decisions are formulated taking full account of the purposes of designation and are implemented in a comprehensive, coherent and consistent way with regard to the character and quality of the area and its setting, together with views into and out of the AONB, such that these decisions result in no net detriment to the special qualities of the AONB	PT6	Work with local planning authorities to identify and remove any barriers to agreeing appropriate and costed projects / activities that help achieve Management Plan objectives or projects, as set out in NPPF 34, to be then included in their Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs).
		PT7	Strongly encourage Local Planning Authorities to direct Community Infrastructure Levies towards agreed and appropriate AONB Management Plan objectives, projects or activities, as set out in their IDPs
		PT8	Seek to achieve net landscape enhancements and biodiversity gain through partner Local Planning Authority policies and Development Management processes

PT9	The Partnership will positively promote AONB purposes, aims and objectives to relevant policy and decision makers both within and outside the AONB through provision of regular information, training sessions and/or through the Annual Planning and Transportation Seminar.
PT10	Ensure that all relevant authorities are aware of their duty to have due regard to the purposes of AONB designation in carrying out each of their functions and duties as required by Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
PT11	The AONB planning protocol continues to be used by local planning authorities to ensure that the AONB Partnership is consulted on all development and land use change proposals that meet the criteria or may have a significant impact and/or effect on the characteristics, special qualities, or setting of the AONB including views into and out of the AONB.
PT12	Encourage Local Planning Authority partners to adopt Supplementary

	<p>Planning Documents that ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and setting of the AONB.</p>
PT13	<p>Encourage Local Planning Authority partners to be guided by AONB Position Statements, Fact Sheets and Good Practice Notes, along with other published guidance that reinforces AONB purposes, when plan making, negotiating, or decision making.</p>
PT14	<p>Development proposals in the AONB or its setting should demonstrate how they have taken account of the AONB Management Plan objectives and policies.</p>
PT15	<p>Local Planning Authority partners ensure that where new development is permitted, it complements the special qualities of the AONB and takes full account of the area's setting and context through the consideration of appropriate Landscape Character Assessments and sensitivity and design studies.</p>
PT16	<p>Support renewable energy generation by technologies that</p>

			<p>integrate with the landscape character, are neither visually intrusive to the AONB or its setting, nor impair significant views to or from it, are not harmful to wildlife, and are of an appropriate scale to their location and siting.</p>
		PT17	<p>Seek to remove or mitigate visually intrusive features, including overhead wires, pylons, and masts.</p>
		PT18	<p>Support farm diversification activities that facilitate rural tourism, land based enterprises, and the reuse of rural buildings that do not result in an increase in traffic, or loss of character or tranquillity, and that help sustain local communities.</p>
		PT19	<p>The Partnership will rigorously assess and respond to all planning applications that meet the planning protocol criteria.</p>
		PT20	<p>The Partnership will develop further Position Statements, Fact Sheets and Good Practice Notes to inform decision makers at all levels on issues affecting the AONB.</p>
PT C	Policies and schemes aimed at meeting the housing and	PT 21	<p>Work with Local Authority partners to establish policies that</p>

	<p>employment needs of local communities enhance the special qualities and characteristics of the AONB, including its built heritage</p>		<p>encourage appropriate use of sustainable technologies, such as solar thermal, photovoltaics and wood fuel (at the appropriate scale) and provide sufficient space for short term handling of waste and recyclable materials, in both domestic and employment situations and, in particular, within all new build projects.</p>
		<p>PT22</p>	<p>Encourage the identification of affordable housing sites in Neighbourhood Plans where that is consistent with the primary purposes of the AONB designation and takes full account of the local distinctiveness, character, and qualities of the locality.</p>
		<p>PT23</p>	<p>When considering proposals for housing development in the AONB, LPA partners will give emphasis to affordable housing, and will treat the AONB as a rural area (NPPF Para 63) where the government's restriction on the requirement to provide affordable housing does not apply.</p>
		<p>PT24</p>	<p>Work with local authority partners to ensure that the replacement of existing dwellings in the AONB and its setting are only</p>

			<p>supported where all the following criteria are met:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the replacement dwelling is not materially larger than the one it replaces; ii. the proposed dwelling does not materially impact on the special qualities of the AONB, especially through its height or bulk; iii. the proposed development will not generate the need for additional ancillary development including storage, parking and hard surfacing; and iv. the proposed permanent dwelling does not replace a temporary structure or one where the residential use has been abandoned
		<p>PT25</p>	<p>Work with local authority partners to ensure that the replacement of existing permanent buildings in the AONB and its setting are only supported where all the following criteria are met:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the replacement building is not materially larger

			<p>than the one it replaces;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. the replacement building is in the same use as the one it replaces; iii. the proposed building does not materially impact on the special qualities of the AONB, especially through its height or bulk; iv. the proposed development will not generate the need for additional ancillary development including storage, parking and hard surfacing.
	<p>PT26</p>	<p>Work with local authority partners to ensure that within the AONB and its setting, extensions to existing permanent buildings are only supported where :</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the proposed extension does not materially impact on the special qualities of the AONB, especially through its height or bulk; and ii. the size and scale of the proposed extension is not disproportionate to the existing building; and iii. the proposed development will

			<p>not generate the need for additional ancillary development including storage, parking and hard surfacing.</p> <p>iv. The size and scale of any garage or outbuilding within the curtilage of a dwelling in the AONB and its setting must be proportionate to the dwelling.</p>
<p>PT D</p>	<p>Transportation planning and management takes full account of the AONB designation, protects the tranquillity and special qualities of the landscape and reduces transport impacts on the environment and communities of the AONB</p>	<p>PT27</p>	<p>a. AONB partner organisations utilise a consistent approach to the design, provision and maintenance of highways and associated features through joint implementation of the ‘Conserving and Enhancing the setting of the AONB Rural Road Network’ highways guidance.</p> <p>b. Major road schemes need to avoid physical and visual impacts on the AONB and its setting, mitigate impacts that cannot be avoided, provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements, and provide compensation for residual and</p>

			unquantified impacts.
		PT28	Promote and help develop an integrated system, whereby roads, railways, public transport and Rights of Way networks are more accessible and interconnect, minimising the impact of traffic on the AONB and encouraging a safer and more attractive environment for walking, cycling and horse riding.
		PT29	Seek to minimise freight transport through the AONB to help protect tranquillity, the rural nature of settlements, and the special qualities of the AONB
		PT30	Promote the provision of affordable parking facilities at public transport nodes, car sharing and community transport initiatives to enable and encourage a reduced reliance on private cars
<i>(Additional Information: Planning and Transport Appendix 33)</i>			

14. Sustaining Rural Communities

The low population density, absence of large settlements within the AONB and daily commuting outside the boundary mainly for work, all potentially threaten the economic viability of remaining local services such as post offices, pubs, doctors' surgeries, village shops and village halls. Alongside the key land-based industries of farming, forestry, game management and related businesses, the rural economy of the AONB comprises a range of small to medium sized businesses. The high quality environment offers immense opportunities for the further development of low impact, sustainable, rural tourism.

14.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to sustaining rural communities:

- Sparsely populated AONB with an absence of large-scale settlements, reinforcing a deeply rural 'sense of place' amongst AONB communities.
- Community spirit is strong in many settlements, as demonstrated through participation in 'Village of the Year' competitions, restoration of lost parish features and organisation of annual fetes, festivals or traditional events.
- Many AONB Parishes have taken the opportunity to express their aspirations by producing Neighbourhood Plans.
- Community enterprise thrives in the AONB through a range of initiatives, including the development of several Community Land Trusts and at least nine community owned and run village stores, each providing other services in addition to retail.
- Generally, however, the majority of employment opportunities are either outside the AONB in the boundary towns or further still afield, with a concentration of employment through a few large employers.
- Strong 'high tech' business growth also occurs at the periphery of the AONB where broadband speeds are generally higher.
- The diverse landscapes, wildlife, historic and cultural features are very attractive to visitors, along with a number of notable visitor attractions
- Artists, authors and musicians are also known to be attracted to this stunning landscape to work
- The seasonal game sector supports several high-end hospitality businesses, primarily 'boutique' style public houses and accommodation providers
- With 96% of the AONB under agriculture or forestry, there are a number of locally based allied services such as vehicle repair/servicing

businesses, currently two livestock markets on the periphery, various timber yards, feed millers/merchants and local craft / food producers.

Ambition:

- 14.2. A thriving rural economy ensures economic and social wellbeing and helps sustain the landscape. Local communities appreciate and care for the AONB; residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Key Achievements

- **Rural Development Programme England** - this AONB has a successful record over a decade of gaining European LEADER funding and facilitating the utilisation of it.
 - **Sowing SEEDS** Local Action Group (2009 -13) - the AONB team along with partners helped to secure £1.5m of LEADER funding to improve the economic and community wellbeing of the area. The Local Action Group area covered the whole of the AONB and parts of North and East Dorset. Over 30 projects were funded during the programme. (See Appendix 18).
 - The **Heart of Wessex** Local Action Group (2015-20). The AONB team and partners secured £1.87m of European LEADER funding to improve the economic and community wellbeing of the Wiltshire part of the AONB. The north and east Dorset areas of the AONB are covered by The Northern Dorset Local Action Group and the Hampshire section by the New Forest Local Action Group. At least seven projects within the AONB have received grants totalling £145,661. These include a 10th Anniversary refit for Wrens Shop in East Knoyle and the restoration of Springhead House, a centre for creative and sustainable living in Fontmell Magna.
- **Sustainable rural tourism** – The ‘Discover Nadder’ initiative developed during 2012-13 with funding from Sowing SEEDS LEADER programme. ‘Discover Chalke’ followed in 2014-15 through AONB funding and a grant from the South West Wiltshire Area Board. The ‘Discover’ initiatives aim to encourage networking, sharing best practice and collaborative working to offer ‘visitor packages’ within the AONB comprising arrival pick up, travel between B&Bs and pre-planned walks/routes to explore.
- **Taste the Chase** – First held in April 2016 this first local food producers’ event received very good reviews from businesses who valued the opportunity to meet new potential sales outlets in the morning (shops, pubs, B&Bs) and the chance to market their wares to the public in the afternoon. Similar but expanded events to include craft producers are planned.
- **A marketing package** was distributed to AONB businesses during 2016-17 including an AONB ‘locator logo’ to utilise on packaging or products and a ‘Sense of Place’ cd containing copyright free photos, village, views and landscape descriptions, together with quotes from local communities for businesses to use in their own marketing. Evaluation of its potential

usefulness to producers and recognition by consumers is ongoing, in advance of a revision in 2018/19.

- **Community shops** - East Knoyle, Hindon, Maiden Bradley, Semley, Coombe Bissett, Wylde, Dinton, Witchampton and Broadchalke have community shops, primarily run by volunteers. Five were supported with AONB Sustainable Development Fund grants and several won LEADER support. The award winning Chalke Valley Stores in Broadchalke has a multi-functional 'hub' comprising a community shop, post office, café, archive area and office space through the multi-use of the United Reform Chapel. This still functions as a chapel on a Sunday. Shortly after opening, the store was voted the winner of the Daily Telegraph/Countryside Alliance competition for the Best Village Shop and Post Office in the UK. The centre is extremely well used with support from around 95 volunteers.
- **Mastless mobile phone coverage** – A few years ago, 3G mobile phone reception was achieved by the local estate and businesses in Cranborne via a trial Vodaphone 'Femto' system using unobtrusive aerials on buildings rather than tall masts. In early 2018, the CH4LKE Mobile⁵⁹ began trialling similar independent 4G to serve Bowerchalke and surrounding villages.
- **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)** – This AONB fund supports projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the AONB and that help to conserve and enhance its culture and heritage. It aims to develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life. Communities value it as it enables them to restore local features, increase the resilience of local services and find new uses for redundant entities

Since its creation in 2005, 116 projects have benefited with SDF expenditure of just over £345,000. After local match funding, the total value of all projects was nearly £2,813,000 demonstrating the efficient and effective use of SDF leveraging in new resources at a rate of 1 to 8.1 (see *Appendix x*). However, budget reductions over time have reduced the available SDF funds to £3,000 in 2018/19.

Key Issues

1. **Leaving the EU** will undoubtedly lead to a period of uncertainty for many businesses and communities within and around the AONB. This may preclude some business start-ups, hinder expansion of others but may also provide new opportunities. Successive LEADER programmes have brought a considerable boost to many AONB businesses through grant aid. On leaving the EU, the LEADER funding programmes will no longer be available to the UK.
2. **'Green' sustainable tourism** within the AONB, which can provide an income for local people and support awareness and enjoyment of the landscape remains, as yet, under-developed. Increased income from tourism is also

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CH4LKE MOBILE is a Community Interest Company set up to provide 4G mobile and fixed wireless broadband services to the Chalke Valley and surrounding area, see: <https://ch4lke.co.uk/>

hampered by a scarcity, and lack of variety, of visitor accommodation available.

3. There remains a **lack of consistent and focussed marketing** promoting the wealth of local products and services on offer within the AONB.
4. Generally, **poor broadband speeds and mobile reception** continue to hamper the growth of rural businesses. The average broadband speed across the UK is 6.5 megabits per second. In the AONB, many people cannot access an acceptable level of broadband service; it can be less than 2 megabits. Without careful design and planning, and the consideration of technologies, the infrastructure to deliver improved services can degrade the natural beauty.
5. **Achieving sustainable communities** – Local people have a range of housing needs. Property values in the AONB are generally, and noticeably, higher than just outside it and there is a lack of affordable housing within this designated area.
6. **Local facilities and services** - Many communities value and prefer to use local facilities that they can access easily, without the need to use a car. It can be difficult to supply facilities and services cost effectively to a dispersed and sparse population. It is a major challenge to secure a full range of services for all to access.
7. **Influencing the planning system** - Local people want to influence the future of their Parish and the outcomes of the planning system. Individual development proposals can create divisions. Neighbourhood plans, village plans⁶⁰ and village design statements are all ways for local people to get together and set out a vision for their area⁶¹. Grants are available, but communities need support in putting these plans together.

The Issues Explained

- 14.3. In the period of the run up to Brexit, there has been new thinking in relation to agricultural and environmental policy. Apart from the land based sector, other rural businesses make a substantial contribution to the national economy with 19% of the country's output coming from rural businesses ⁶². With LEADER and other rural development funding ceasing after leaving the EU, any successor funding is not yet detailed or confirmed.
- 14.4. Land based employment within this AONB is mainly focused within the productive aspects of farming and forestry; the seasonal game sector and the allied service/product businesses. Other employment comprises those businesses that provide a range of services to local communities and some

⁶⁰ Village plans have different names within the 4 counties eg in Hampshire they are Parish Plans or Community Plans

⁶¹ These matters are set out earlier in greater detail in paragraph 5.4

⁶² Professor Mark Shucksmith, Centre for Rural Economy.

largely tourism focused attractions that gain their income mainly from visitors from outside the area.

- 14.5. Many of these businesses depend on the high quality natural environment that the landscape provides, but they can also help maintain and enhance those environments. Attracted by the qualities of this landscape, creative businesses such as arts and crafts enterprises, are also flourishing.⁶³
- 14.6. This AONB provides a high quality setting for the tourism sector. As well as several outstanding National Trust properties and Longleat Safari Park, there is a very strong business case to have the AONB at the heart of 'green' tourism. There are many sustainable, low impact tourism opportunities in the area including walking, cycling and horse riding, visiting historic sites or enjoying the range of local events. The creation of an International Dark-Sky Reserve status could give a huge boost to the 'astro' or 'green' tourism sector. Even as the bid is developed, the promotion of the undoubted dark skies of the AONB is extensive. (See Dark Night Skies Chapter 11).
- 14.7. Until the 2012/13 Sustainable Rural Tourism Project there had been little promotion or marketing of the opportunities. Local tourism networks are still only now just emerging. The sector can improve the quality of the visitor experience and the quality of life of the local community.
- 14.8. Past campaigns such as 'Taste of the West' encourage consumers to purchase locally sourced food. This helps forge closer links between producers and customers. The 'Taste the Chase' initiative in Cranborne Chase AONB increased consumers' understanding of the countryside; how food is produced; and where food comes from. Several thriving community shops stock and promote mainly local produce.
- 14.9. Promoting the AONB with a strong brand linked to the AONB's special qualities could considerably increase the contribution that tourism makes to the rural economy.
- 14.10. Good communications are essential if the local economy is to grow. Superfast broadband allows easier and more efficient ways to do business and makes it possible to work from home. Good communications can also help reduce rural isolation and digital exclusion. People can be in touch with family and friends. They can find new ways of receiving public services. The challenge is to encourage provision without the use of intrusive masts, or other infrastructure in the landscape that would have a detrimental effect on the scenic beauty of this AONB.
- 14.11. There is a lack of affordable housing for youngsters or those wishing to come into the AONB for work. People with higher than average incomes are attracted by the beauty of the AONB landscape as a desirable place to live. This has led to a consequential rise in house prices. Houses in this AONB cost in the order of 26% more than comparable properties outside⁶⁴. There is a gain in value

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So Much More Than the View – material published by National Park England and the NAAONB

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See research by Savills at <http://www.savills.co.uk/blog/article/200876/residential-property/the-value-of-our-natural-heritage-in-property.aspx>

simply by being in a protected landscape. A percentage of that gain could be utilised to help manage the landscape of this AONB.

14.12. Affordability is an acute issue for newly forming households and many young people move away to find more affordable properties in the bordering market towns or further afield. This can lead to an imbalance in the age and social structure in rural communities, with less support for services such as schools, shops and a loss of social networks. There have also been changes in consumer behaviour (e.g. online shopping) and cuts to public funding (e.g. public transport routes). Both can lead to the closure of local facilities and services with fewer people using services and facilities.

14.13. The loss of a rural Post Office can also work against small local businesses that use postal/delivery services to receive materials and to distribute services and products. However, the growing numbers of community-run village shops have taken some of the AONB's stand-alone Post Offices in-house.

14.14. Many people want to exercise their right to get involved in development decisions that affect them. The Localism Act 2011 gave people more input to the development of their local area through the creation of Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders. Support and encouragement is needed to enable communities engaging with the planning process and their local planning authority, to ensure that they meet statutory requirements and take account of all aspects of what makes rural communities viable. This AONB has offered advice and helped input to 8 Neighbourhood Plans to date.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
SRC A	Local communities benefit from a sustainable rural economy, based on the resources of the AONB, that also conserves and enhances its landscape character and special qualities	SRC1	Utilise funding initiatives that emerge to help achieve the needs of the local economy without compromising the special qualities of the AONB landscape and environment
		SRC2	Work collaboratively with landowners, farmers and allied businesses to improve the land-based sectors resilience and profitability whilst helping to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB landscape

		<p>SRC3</p>	<p>Encourage efforts to provide superfast broadband to all AONB communities that avoid adverse impacts on the habitats and scenic beauty of the AONB.</p>
		<p>SRC4</p>	<p>Support the development of appropriate recreation and tourism facilities, including a range of quality accommodation, that support a sustainable visitor economy whilst promoting and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB</p>
<p>SRC B</p>	<p>The AONB is promoted as a high quality Sustainable Rural Tourism destination</p>	<p>SRC5</p>	<p>Signpost AONB tourism businesses to information and skills training, support, and advice to enable their businesses to be more sustainable and to better promote the special qualities of the AONB to visitors</p>
		<p>SRC6</p>	<p>Continue to develop the AONB brand, locator logo and an Ambassador Scheme for communities and businesses to inspire a strong sense of place, encouraging high quality, green tourism initiatives and marketing that contribute to the understanding, conservation and enhancement of the area.</p>

		SRC7	Work with businesses and artists to develop a public art trail for 2020 that encourages increased footfall to business within the AONB whilst raising the profile of the AONB
SRC C	Proactive and cohesive communities enjoy a high quality of life	SRC8	Work with partners to increase the provision of affordable housing in and around the AONB where that is consistent with the primary purposes of AONB designation
		SRC9	Formulate, with relevant partners, a developer contribution scheme to secure monies from the enhanced property values in the AONB to support the management of the AONB's character, qualities, and landscapes which bring about those heightened values.
		SRC10	Support community initiatives that promote sustainable lifestyles such as those embracing community shops or combined/mobile community facilities, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, community woodlands, recycling and community transport in order to encourage and maintain the viability and diversity of rural community life
		SRC11	Encourage and support additional communities to engage with the

			Neighbourhood Plan process, taking account of the wider landscape, environmental, cultural and historic aspects of their community area as well as the social and economic factors that may affect it
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(Additional Information: Viable Rural Communities Appendix 34)

SPECIAL LANDSCAPES TO ENJOY

15. Awareness and Understanding

The AONB comprises living, working landscapes shaped and managed by people. The natural beauty, historic and cultural heritage has long provided inspiration for artists, crafts people, writers and musicians; many of whom have made the area their home. To ensure that all recognise, enjoy and value the landscapes, it is vital to improve awareness and understanding of the AONB.

15.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regard to awareness and understanding:

- The AONB is an inspirational area; a ‘hidden gem’ with a wealth of visual, natural, historical and cultural characteristics.
- Cultural footprints through the ages are visible throughout the landscape.
- The diverse and distinctive elements comprise the AONB are a valuable, mainly untapped, educational resource.
- Many local people and visitors value the special qualities of the area, including its tranquillity and dark night skies.
- There are nearly 2/3 million people within thirty minutes drive of the AONB in surrounding market towns, and the Bournemouth and Poole conurbations.
- The landscape character of the AONB can be appreciated and valued by non-experts
- The AONB boasts a wealth of myths, mystery and legends.

Ambitions

15.2. Everyone understands and values the area’s special qualities and landscape character. This will include its historic and natural assets, its traditions and its mystery and mythical qualities. They will understand what the AONB designation means and why the area was designated. They will want to visit and spread the word. We want everyone to promote and support the AONB.

Key Achievements

- **This AONB’s family of websites** – The AONB website is one of a suite of sites developed to promote special topics and projects; Chasing Stars, Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme, Historic Landscape, Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust and the sustainable tourism sites Discover Nadder and Discover Chalke Valley. The AONB website boasts regular news stories and a full calendar of events occurring

in the area.

- **AONB leaflets** – Several general information leaflets on the area, its places, and its food have been published. Packs of walking and cycling routes have been produced for the sustainable tourism. These packs are in tourist information centres, especially those in the border market towns of Blandford, Salisbury, Shaftesbury, Warminster and Wimborne. In addition to a suite of information and guidance notes on development topics, including landscapes and neighbourhood planning, a number of leaflets focus on our bid for International Dark Sky Reserve status. One includes the top 10 places for stargazing within the area and another offers guidance on good lighting.
- **AONB Forums** - In response to the increasing consultation demands on community volunteers, the Partnership holds a forum biennial rather than annually. Around 50-70 attendees come from different interest groups, both from within and outside the area. Presentations and workshops focus on topics of current interest.
- **The E-Bulletin** - This monthly E-bulletin presents a vast array of stories. These are not only connected to the AONB Partnership's work, but also to projects and events run independently. While it still lacks the reach of The Hart⁶⁵, which was a hard copy newsletter sent to every home and business within the AONB, the E-bulletins have proved to be an effective way of keeping touch with communities.
- **Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme (CCCV LPS)** – a first stage pass for this Heritage Lottery funded project has generated significant community interest and through innumerable meetings and consultations to develop the round two bid has contributed to raising the profile of the whole AONB.
- **Social media** - The AONB is now very active on social media. However, a revised promotional strategy is needed, as numbers 'following' these accounts could be improved.
- **Local and national press coverage** –The AONB received national press coverage in 2017 in Country Life magazine and in local glossy 'Life' titles. These include Wiltshire Life and Dorset Magazine, the farming press and the Warminster Journal. The AONB submits a regular column to the Blackmore Vale Magazine that covers the majority of the area.
- **Wood Fair** – There were five Cranborne Chase Wood Fair events held on a biennial cycle from 2007-2015. Each attracted around 7,000 visitors. The primary aim of the weekend event was to showcase AONB woodlands and their ongoing management. This included the variety of skills and craftsmanship that produce locally sourced and produced goods and services. Feedback from the events was consistently excellent but austerity measures during the last few years led to its cessation.
- **Branding initiative** – The AONB team and Bournemouth University are working in tandem to highlight the special, mythical, mysterious and magical

treasures of the Chase. This may be the basis for further image and branding activities. A new brand image would help raise the area's profile and encourage tourism. This would link to the 'Sense of Place' tool-kit for communities and businesses to promote themselves as a part of the AONB and their sustainable tourism initiatives.

Key Issues

1. Low public profile of the designation.
2. The lack of awareness among some of the AONB population of the designation purpose or boundaries is a concern. People are often unaware of the benefits gained from the designation, such as the high quality environment, recreation and health and wellbeing opportunities or the role they can play in caring for the area.
3. Significance to partners and other organisations.
4. The AONB lies across the borders of four counties; Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. This generates an 'edge effect'. Other partners and organisations do not always have a full understanding of the designation; or of the work undertaken by the Partnership.
5. Engaging young people.
6. To date, it has been difficult to engage with young people. To do so is vital, as they will be the future custodians of the landscapes.

The Issues Explained

15.3. Despite the AONB being designated in 1981, and having a small team in place since 2004, the AONB Partnership continues to find that there is a limited understanding of:

- where the AONB boundaries are;
- why the area was designated;
- what the AONB designation means; and
- the benefits that it brings.

'When meeting members of the public when on the land, I feel there is a lack of awareness in the population both locally and nationally that this AONB exists. This probably needs to be addressed. It has the potential to bring more business to the local shops and pubs in communities within the AONB and so help them become more sustainable and build up village communities again as opposed to allowing them to become only satellites for the wealthy who wish to live in the country.'

- 15.4. On learning more about the AONBs existence and extent, a very frequent and familiar comment is one of surprise as to its size. The AONB has no '*Welcome to..*' signage on any roads leading into the area. A desk study determined that to sign each Trunk, 'A' and 'B' class road together with some minor, yet frequently used roads, between 36 and 41 signs would be required due to the frequency that these roads cross the AONB boundary. The number required and exact locations requires further discussion both within the Partnership and with the four Highways Authorities.
- 15.5. The many dispersed small villages and hamlets of the area might also be offered an AONB sign or logo to add to their village entrance signs to help raise the AONB profile, while the concept of adding the logo to Rights of Way way-markers has already begun, in partnership with Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust.
- 15.6. Awareness of the AONB will also improve with regular, consistent and engaging promotion, using a strong brand image and easily accessible information whether via hard copy, web sites or comprehensive use of all social media channels.
- 15.7. Knowledge of the area's special qualities, landscape character, its traditions and its historic and natural assets is not as widespread as the Partnership would like. Innovative digital or site based interpretation would increase understanding and appreciation of the AONBs special qualities. Regular engagement with residents and visitors of all ages (through annual programmes of walks, events and activities, competitions and/or a 'Pride of the AONB' award scheme) would also positively increase involvement and pride in, and enjoyment of, the area as well as raising its profile.
- 15.8. The AONB team already consults with, and works alongside partners, parishes, farmers and interest groups as part of its ongoing work programme or Management Plan reviews. However, this wide-ranging and extensive promotion and outreach work requires additional resources to be secured, if the critical link between the Partnership and the communities of the AONB is to be improved.
- 15.9. It is well understood and accepted that Local Authority and other AONB partners have changing and/or increasing demands placed on them; they also inevitably have personnel changes. The AONB Partnership should be aware of the need to consistently re-iterate or re-enforce information regarding its designation purpose and the duties of others towards it. On its behalf, the AONB team should consider if further information needs to be drawn together that would be specifically helpful to different departments or partners and how that information might be most effectively disseminated, e.g. a regular planners' bulletin, parish training workshops or 'surgeries' for communities

- 15.10. Aimed at businesses and parishes, the 'Sense of Place' promotional toolkit shows all the special places, views, activities and wildlife of the AONB. All were chosen by local people. Anyone is free to copy the text and pictures to use in their own marketing material. This sends out consistent messages about the area in which the businesses are based, offering businesses and community groups the chance to promote their business or parish events, and the AONB, in parallel and with one voice. This resource needs to be regularly reviewed and updated.
- 15.11. Social media is an incredibly important asset to the AONB, is a key communications tool, and especially significant in attracting the younger generation to engage with it. The AONB should continue to raise its profile and promote its activities, news and encouraging feedback via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, amongst others.
- 15.12. The CCCV LPS is designed to attract, engage and involve all ages, backgrounds and abilities in discovering, learning about and enhancing the heritage of the scheme area, which covers approximately a quarter of the AONB. Some opportunities have been devised specifically to attract and engage youngsters. Exciting, creative projects with innovative digital interpretation have been developed to bring the AONB 'to life'. This scheme has the potential to significantly increase both the profile of the AONB, and appreciation of everything the AONB has to offer all residents and visitors. The AONB should grasp any opportunity to expand these projects across the whole area.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
AU A	The purposes of AONB designation are known and understood by all	AU1	Develop and promote a strong and distinctive identity/brand image for the AONB to all
		AU2	Work with partners to progress the potential for distinctive AONB signage at boundaries of, and within, the AONB
		AU3	Work with Local Authorities, parish councils, partners and community groups to develop AONB information and learning opportunities (information, training, seminars) relevant to their work
		AU4	Continue to review and deliver the AONB Communications Strategy to ensure all the elements of the

			AONBs work are promoted via the most appropriate media/channels
AU B	The AONB landscapes, natural beauty and high quality environment are understood, valued and supported by all.	AU5	Work, with partners, to investigate the potential to secure field based staff to help plan, manage and deliver an array of outreach activities throughout the AONB
		AU6	Develop and implement an Interpretative Strategy to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation across the AONB
		AU7	Seek specific opportunities to promote awareness, understanding and engagement of all aspects of the AONB to young people in particular, using the most appropriate
<i>(Additional Information: Awareness and Understanding Appendix 35)</i>			

16. Wellbeing, Involvement and Learning

Experiencing a deeply rural and tranquil area refreshes the mind, body, and soul. Volunteering is one means of becoming more personally involved in the local area whilst developing a range of practical and personal skills to help conserve and enhance it. Using the AONB as an educational resource for schools will help youngsters gain a better insight into environmental issues and experience the countryside around them. The vast network of Rights of Way offers opportunities for all to enhance their health and wellbeing in the 'great outdoors'.

16.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to wellbeing, involvement, learning:

- A peaceful, tranquil, deeply rural area, with far reaching panoramic views uncluttered by industrial intrusions, a strong sense of remoteness and expanses of dark, star filled night skies supports the wellbeing of local communities and visitors.
- The AONB is close to nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ million people; they can each reach its borders in just 30 minutes
- There is a high quality and diverse range of natural, historic and cultural environments; they provide the widest range of opportunities for volunteering, and learning in a natural classroom
- The AONB has an extensive web of countryside access (Rights of Way, open access, permissive and named routes); the combined length of which would take you from Southampton to Edinburgh and back again.

Ambition

16.2. People's physical and mental wellbeing is improved through experiencing the high quality environment of the AONB for physical activity, relaxation and inspiration. People learn about, and understand, the natural, historic and cultural heritage of the AONB. People of all ages, abilities and backgrounds will have the opportunity to take up volunteering and countryside skills training in the AONB.

Key Achievements

- **Community consultation** has always been a high priority for this AONB, especially regarding Management Plan Reviews, offering the opportunity for communities and interest groups to help shape the future of their area
- **University learning** - The Team hosted annual visits from Heritage Conservation undergraduates from Bournemouth and Bath Universities, and has established links with the staff and post-graduate sides of Winchester and Bournemouth Universities.

- **Chilmark Gardening Club, volunteers and schoolchildren** were all involved in growing and planting out plug plants on chalk grassland over three years whilst during 2017-18, over 650 attended stargazing evenings or visited the Mizon Travelling Planetarium with 450 children receiving 'Space Detective' workshops as part of their curriculum studies.
- **Outreach** – seminars and conferences have offered learning and involvement opportunities in recent years:
 - 12 annual landscape and planning seminars attended by officers, councillors and AONB colleagues;
 - AONB Annual Forums with up to 100 attending;
 - 2 woodland management seminars for owners and managers;
 - 2 major historic landscape conferences each attracting 100+ attendees;
 - 3 land manager seminars focussing on topical issues;
 - numerous presentations have been given to Parish Councils, natural and historic interest groups, University of the 3rd Age;
 - specific training on landscape and planning issues delivered to LA officers of relevant authorities
- **Farmland Bird Project outreach over 4 years**

Media coverage highlighting the project and Cranborne Chase AONB	16 published articles, 6 radio interviews, 2 TV slots, 2 You tube videos, 353 followers on Twitter, 16 blog posts
Presentations to farms	127 attended
Project related training sessions	195 farmers/landowners/advisers
Public Walks and Talks	14 walks and talks for the public to 365 people
Farmers and landowners attending project related events	233

- **Volunteers** –
 - 300 potential volunteers have offered and/or given time for a variety of project work or research
 - 25 regular volunteers were crucial to the successful operation of five successful Cranborne Chase Wood Fair events
 - Foundations of Archaeology HLF funded project engaged with an additional 200+ trained and experienced volunteers 2015-17 with specific interest in the historic environment.
- **Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership** - First

Round Heritage Lottery Fund pass. A successful second round bid will result in a £2.4m programme of work to conserve and enhance the natural, historic and cultural elements of the Landscape Partnership area, to enthuse people to engage with it, and provide a legacy of knowledge and understanding.

Key issues

1. The Government's 25 year Environment Plan⁶⁶ has an aim to connect people and the environment to improve health and wellbeing. It promotes three elements relevant to this AONB:
 - i. Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces;
 - ii. Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school; and
 - iii. Making 2019 a year of action for the environment - encourage adults and children to take positive steps to help the natural environment.
2. There is great potential in Cranborne Chase AONB to help achieve the government's goal of engaging people with the natural environment. Cranborne Chase AONB is accessible in half an hour to 2/3 million residents from the major conurbations of Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch with a further 120,000 people on its doorstep in the surrounding market towns, offering a potentially important place for informal recreation and increased health and wellbeing for those residents. This potential is restricted for many by very scarce public transport and a continuing lack of awareness of what the area has to offer.
3. There is a significant evidence base for the range of individual and wider social health and well-being benefits that can be achieved through outdoor activity and contact with nature. Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) has been working with other LNPs across the South West on a Health and Nature Charter. The Partnership will positively explore the potential to sign this charter to cover the whole AONB⁶⁷. Relevant health professionals may not currently be aware of the breadth of opportunities the AONB offers for improving physical and mental health and wellbeing. It can be difficult finding and engaging with the most relevant health professionals with ongoing restructuring of the National Health Service.
4. Working with schools and youth groups has always been an ongoing ambition of the AONB Partnership with successful packages focusing on food miles/local produce and, more recently, 'Space Detectives'. Further work is needed alongside teachers and relevant partners to greatly increase awareness of the natural classroom on the doorstep of the many schools and higher education establishments in and around the AONB.

⁶⁶

The Government, A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, 2018

⁶⁷

www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/Health_and_Nature_Charter

5. There remains a need for more round walking routes close to villages, routes suitable for the elderly, the less mobile and much better promotion of their existence. The Rights of Way across the AONB do not form a true 'network'; there are gaps where routes could be linked up. Signage and maintenance is not consistent across the area, which can lead to a variable quality of experience. Reduced County Council budgets for maintenance results in a greater reliance on local groups and volunteers to undertake practical work. The Rights of Way teams have some volunteer engagement and the AONB can help build on these initiatives. Accessing the countryside sustainably implies the need for more effective provision and use of public transport by rail and road.
6. Some partner organisations use volunteers in the conservation management of their own land or reserves in the AONB, however the majority of the AONB area is known as a 'black hole' for volunteering. There is a multitude of opportunities throughout the rest of the AONB landscape for engaging volunteers in numerous activities. There is a need for knowledgeable, experienced staff to plan, coordinate and lead this activity on the ground.
7. There is a growing interest in learning and developing traditional rural skills with communities suggesting hedge laying, scything, charcoal burning, thatching, weaving and stone carving, are of interest. There is a recognised loss of traditional countryside skills in the AONB including the skills needed to repair or restore historic buildings. Evidence shows a need, and desire, for a centre or hub for academic and life-long learning and volunteering within the AONB. As those colleges offering such learning are too distant to attend daily without personal transport.

The Issues Explained

- 16.3. Rural public transport is scarce within and around the AONB. There are regular, if infrequent, bus routes east/west between Shaftesbury, Blandford and Salisbury that do take in some villages however north/south routes are rare. Visiting Cranborne Chase AONB from the conurbations to the south (Bournemouth/Poole) is difficult without private transport. Nevertheless, greater promotion of this AONB to those living outside it should be undertaken, suggesting particular areas or points of interest for those unfamiliar with it.
- 16.4. For those who may visit more regularly for informal walking or cycling, promotion of day-visit and longer packages would assist by defining length of walk, difficulty, refreshment stops and 'nuggets' of innovative interpretation along the way.
- 16.5. It is important that the Health and Wellbeing Boards, together with the relevant professionals, are made aware of the potential opportunities for improving lives through access to the quality environment of the AONB. Key benefits can include better physical and mental health and guarding against future illness; therapeutic and restorative qualities which enhance recovery; reduced social isolation, greater community cohesion, and opportunities to establish lifelong healthy behaviours. Outdoor activity and contact with nature can also help

improve sleep patterns, reduce stress, improve mood and self-esteem, and provide meaningful social contact.⁶⁸

- 16.6. The AONB and relevant partners should encourage communities to take the opportunity to 'refresh mind, body and soul' here, through promoting the AONB as a 'natural health centre'. The green gym concept, developed by The Conservation Volunteers, provides people with a way to enhance their fitness and health while taking action to improve the environment.
- 16.7. 'Green prescriptions' are concepts becoming popular with GPs⁶⁹. These should all be developed and promoted by the AONB together with the Health and Wellbeing Boards and relevant partners. A full annual programme of guided walks, talks and activities by knowledgeable, experienced and appropriately trained staff or volunteers could also tempt more frequent visits from both within and outside the AONB. Closing gaps in the myriad of Rights of Way in the AONB should form an easily accessible resource for all and developing more circular routes in close proximity to homes, would also benefit those who may not venture out due to cultural barriers or lack of awareness or confidence.
- 16.8. Local and national nature reserves in the AONB offer localised volunteer opportunities. The 'Leisure Credits' scheme⁷⁰ in the AONB engages young people in practical environmental tasks; it would like to expand. There are also some active volunteers and groups focused on access. Nevertheless, there are few substantive practical volunteer activities in the wider countryside of the AONB.
- 16.9. There is now acknowledged support for a 'hub', or central base, for all types of volunteering, countryside skills training, together with an information and interpretative centre for visitors. This could be achieved through a multifunctional AONB Countryside Centre. This concept has generated interest from a wide range of people and organisations, many of whom would become partners. As partners, they would help devise training and volunteering programmes that will harness the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of many.
- 16.10. As well as providing a focus for this nationally important landscape, a Countryside Centre could offer:
 - Accredited training opportunities in countryside management skills, conservation, agriculture, forestry, livestock/animal husbandry and a variety of rural industry skills (e.g. blacksmithing).
 - A wide range of volunteering opportunities including natural history surveys, historic research and countryside management tasks.
 - Exciting recreational opportunities such as guided walks, dark night skies events and utilising all terrain mobility scooters for the less able.

⁶⁸ <https://sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/>

⁶⁹ <https://sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/what-we-do/green-space/green-health-routes>

⁷⁰ The Leisure Credit Scheme involves young people in undertaking voluntary work and receiving Leisure Credits which are redeemed for reward trips or activities. The number of Credits a young person receives is based on how hard they worked and how well they worked as part of a team.

- An opportunity to take part in or attend various art based activities focussed on the special qualities of the AONB.
 - Professional, environmentally related CPD training courses for environmental professionals locally, regionally and from further afield, which could include for example, countryside, agricultural, forestry and land agency staff, those attached to all the nationally Protected Areas, the renewable energy sector and teachers/lecturers. Participants would be encouraged to stay locally.
 - A visitor centre for the area providing information on which events are on, what there is to see and do in the AONB and surrounding market towns, encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more locally.
 - A facility for hire to external companies or organisations wanting to hold their own events or seminars.
 - Environmental play schemes during the holiday periods, encouraging exchange of town/country experiences for young people.
- 16.11. Countryside management tasks led by competent and experienced staff, complimented by volunteers, will help to conserve and enhance the landscape of the AONB. The construction and running of the centre will demonstrate best practice. The intent is to use a variety of sustainable construction techniques and methods. It will demonstrate the use of green energy sources such as wood chip and solar power. Where feasible, volunteers or trainees will complete some of the construction work. The skills gained through the centre will improve the job prospects of trainees.
- 16.12. The loss of traditional skills is a significant issue for the future management of the landscape. A revival in such skills, and the ability to make a living from using them, should be encouraged.
- 16.13. Young people in the area have to travel a long way to attend county agricultural colleges and other training centres. For many potential students of all ages, the lack and cost of public transport mean that accessing countryside skills training can be very difficult. Access to accredited training needs to be made available closer to their homes.
- 16.14. The Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley LPS has involvement and learning embedded as a key element of all the individual projects but it should also be the foundation of the scheme legacy. Such a Countryside Centre would enable lifelong involvement and learning for all.
- 16.15. 2019 is the Year of Green Action for 10–20 year olds; encouraging social engagement within communities with a focus on green issues.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE

POLICIES

WIL A	Improved health and well-being opportunities are developed and promoted throughout the AONB	WIL 1	Work with Health and Wellbeing Boards, relevant health professionals, Local Nature Partnerships and relevant funding initiatives to develop and promote activity programmes in the AONB to improve health and well being
		WIL2	Investigate funding opportunities to enhance the Rights of Way / countryside access network for all, including the provision of vehicles suitable for use by the less able
		WIL3	Develop an annual programme of activities, with partners, for all ages and abilities to include a Walking Festival and targeted options for enhancing health, such as 'a mile a day' initiatives.
WIL B	A wide range of opportunities exist for schools, residents and visitors to learn more about the AONB, volunteer or develop heritage and countryside skills	WIL4	Explore with Education Departments, and schools, how engagement with the 'outdoor classroom' of the AONB may add value to curriculum studies
		WIL5	Further develop an Involvement and Learning Strategy to increase learning, training and volunteering opportunities, improving countryside and heritage skills, within the AONB by the end of 2019/20.
		WIL6	Work with partners to engage field based staff/rangers to harness community and volunteer commitment and interest in the AONB to develop programmes of volunteer projects and activities
		WIL7	Investigate the potential to become a partners in the Duke of Edinburgh, and John Muir, Award Schemes

WIL C	An exemplar 'AONB Countryside Centre' is established	WIL8	Continue work to establish an environmentally and financially sustainable 'AONB Countryside Centre' by the end of this plan period, to act as the base for the AONB Partnership, volunteers, trainees, students, residents and visitors
<i>(Additional Information: Involvement and Learning Appendix 36)</i>			

GETTING THINGS DONE

17. The AONB Partnership

17.1. Special characteristics regarding the Cranborne Chase AONB Partnership:

- Inter-authority, cross border joint working to further the purposes of AONB designation. The seven Local Authorities involved are: Wiltshire and Dorset Councils; Hampshire and Somerset County Councils; and New Forest, Mendip and South Somerset District Councils. The percentage covered by each of the constituent Local Authorities is given in Map 3
- A total of sixteen national and local organisations of the Partnership contributing to the development of the strategic AONB Management Plans
- A consistent commitment to 'bottom up' community involvement and engagement in AONB matters
- The national, regional and local organisations represented on the AONB Partnership have contributed to this Management Plan as have a large number of interest groups, local communities and individuals. *The Partnership Structure is shown in Appendix 3.*

Aim

17.2. The organisations that make up the AONB Partnership, and all those that have responsibility and resources to help achieve the primary purpose, fully understand and take responsibility for 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape'.

Achievements to date

- The preparation, publication and implementation of three quinquennial Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plans.
- Encouragement of additional partners and joint working, such as:
 - Historic Environment Actions Plans - partners include Historic England, archaeology groups, relevant Local Authority Officers, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), local experts and volunteers amongst many others
 - South West Farmland Bird Initiative - partners included Wessex Water, Natural England, the National Farmers Union and farmers/landowners
 - The Farm Conservation Project - partners are the AONB, Wessex Water, farmers and landowners.
 - Ancient and Veteran Trees Pilot Project - partners included Hampshire County Council, Woodland Trust and volunteers
 - Tranquillity Study - partners included CPRE and volunteers

- Sustainable Rural Tourism Project - partners included Sowing SEEDS Leader funding, South West Wiltshire Area Board, local Chambers of Commerce, local businesses and volunteers
- Sowing SEEDS Leader programme - with Community Partnership Executive of North Dorset, Local Action Group (LAG) members and local communities
- Heart of Wessex LEADER programme – with South Somerset District Council, Frome Town Council, Wincanton Community Venture (The Balsam Centre) and Wiltshire Council
- Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme, Stage 1 bid success - AONB with Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy
- Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme, Stage 2 bid working in partnership with a multitude of professional and community partners
- Bid for International Dark-Sky Reserve status with the Commission for Dark Skies, British Astronomical Association, Wessex Astronomical Society, Local Authority partners, Lighting Consultancy And Design Services and many parish, interest and community groups.
- Heart of Wessex and Northern Dorset EU Leader programmes covering the Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset parts of the AONB.
- First round pass for Heritage Lottery Funded Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership. A successful second round bid will result in a £2.4m programme of work to conserve and enhance the natural, historic and cultural elements of the landscape and to enthuse people to engage with it.

Key Issues

1. The engagement and commitment of AONB partners, and all those that have responsibility and resources to help achieve the primary purpose, to be directly or indirectly involved in delivering Management Plan objectives varies widely
2. Some partners are not fully aware of the range of documents and guidance produced by the AONB Partnership that could assist them in their duty to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB'
3. Frequent personnel changes within Local Authorities, the restructuring of Local Authorities themselves, and other organisations often results in a lack of awareness and knowledge about the AONB, with new staff and/or councillors in post
4. The government initiated a Review of Protected Landscapes during 2018; it reports back to government in 2019. The Partnership will need to respond to the findings and outcomes of that Review.

The Issues Explained

- 17.3. The AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is a strategic plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB drawn together on behalf of the 16 organisations that make up the Partnership. It has been endorsed by all 16 partner organisations and, in addition, has been formally adopted by the 7 Local Authorities.
- 17.4. Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 it is a legal duty for all relevant authorities to 'have regard to' the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the area. These relevant authorities include all statutory bodies, organisations and all tiers of government, including parish councils and holders of public office.
- 17.5. For government, local authorities, other public bodies and other 'relevant authorities', active support of the *implementation of this plan* is the key to satisfying their 'Section 85' duty.
- 17.6. The fundamental purpose of this Management Plan is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. Co-ordinated and collective action is needed by a wide range of interests to ensure that the AONB continues to provide valued environmental benefits, including clean air, water and food, maintains strong, vibrant local communities and is enjoyed by future generations.
- 17.7. The AONB Partnership has worked with a wide range of partners in the delivery of actions on the ground. It will be increasingly important throughout this next plan period to retain existing partners and attract new ones. It has the administrative backing, structure and experience to facilitate the Government's 25 year environment agenda and offer locally based agency services; implementing national policies at a local, landscape scale.
- 17.8. Local Authorities are large organisations and often have staff changes. The communication skills of Partnership representatives need to be exceptionally good to ensure relevant documents are continually fed down through each organisation and contact between the AONB and relevant staff is maintained.
- 17.9. It is vital that as many people as possible are engaged in helping to achieve Plan objectives. More emphasis will be placed on encouraging and managing additional partner organizations, communities, volunteers and interest groups to become involved in helping make the vision for this AONB a reality.
- 17.10. The success of the Plan depends upon good relationships and joint working between public bodies at all levels, statutory and non-statutory agencies and organisations, farmers and land managers, community groups, interest groups and individuals. The diverse challenges and accelerating pace of change that face the AONB must be seen as an opportunity for all sectors of the community, in its widest sense, to work together. Pooling resources, sharing expertise and working together present the best opportunities for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of this AONB.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
P	All current and new AONB partners work pro-actively to jointly achieve Management Plan objectives	P1	Existing partners review and agree a new partnership structure during 2019, including a review of partner organisations invited to join the Partnership
		P2	The AONB team and all relevant partners collaborate and sign up to individually or jointly delivering themed Action Plans covering the time span of the Management Plan
		P3	Each partner ensures that all protocols, Position Statements, Fact Sheets, Good Practice and other Guidance documents are known about, understood, used by all relevant departments and officers.
		P4	Ensure high-level officers and Members are aware of the AONB designation, purpose(s) and duty towards it, through Member briefings, training sessions and the Annual Forum.

18. Funding

Aim

- 18.1. Funding is secured to support the core work of the Cranborne Chase AONB Partnership and Team and project work is underway utilising pooled resources of several partners or externally acquired funding.

Achievements to date

- Sowing SEEDS Leader programme - £1.5m.
- Heart of Wessex LEADER programme - £1,811,448
- Heritage Lottery Fund, Parish Archive Project - £50k.
- Heritage Lottery Fund, Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership First Round bid - £100k
- Natural England, SW Farmland Bird Initiative - £28k pa (4 years).
- Wessex Water partner funding for SW Farmland Bird Initiative - £25k pa until 2017.
- Wessex Water Partners Programme - £10k pa over consecutive Partner Programmes
- Additional Local Authority contributions for specific projects e.g. Ancient and Veteran Trees Pilot Project and Farmland Bird project (Hampshire County Council) and 2010 Heritage Lottery Fund application (Dorset County Council).
- Campaign to Protect Rural England - contribution to AONB tranquillity study and the Parish Appraisal Good Practice Guidance.

Key issues

1. The government requires and expects the highest level of protection for AONBs. The level of future exchequer funding over the Plan period is, at the time of writing, unknown.
2. Local Authority budgets are diminishing whilst demand for their services and funding increases.
3. Applications to external grant programmes are becoming increasingly competitive with many organisations and conservation groups experiencing reductions or cuts to funding.
4. Opportunities to pursue additional and alternative funding sources and mechanisms are crucial and demand the necessary resources to be allocated to this task.

5. Local Authority Partnerships, such as the AONB, are ineligible to apply to certain funding programmes e.g. from some Trusts and Foundations.

The Issues Explained

- 18.2. Local Authority funding is likely to reduce over the plan period whilst future central government funding levels are currently unknown post 2020. During the five year period 2015-20, exchequer funding levels were confirmed in advance. This gave much welcomed security in forward planning. Potential income has been lost through grants being cut or reduced; Local Authorities are often no longer able to continue some of their work, such as biodiversity partnership coordination and there is increased competition for funding to key funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 18.3. It will be increasingly important to ensure that the purpose of AONBs is widely communicated both locally and nationally. Cranborne Chase AONB will maintain a close relationship with, and input to the work of, the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONBs). This body represents the AONB Family on national issues including policy and advocacy, communications, training and securing resources.
- 18.4. The Partnership must have regard to the skilled staff resources at its disposal and the financial projections over the next five years. The resources for delivering all Plan objectives have not been secured at the time of writing this Plan. Many of the most significant actions will require the pooling of resources by several organisations and/or success in attracting funding from a range of public, private and not-for-profit sector sources.
- 18.5. Given the current tight financial circumstances there will be a need for all partners and the AONB team to prioritise workloads to ensure a strong focus on the core AONB purpose, to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area'.
- 18.6. It will be increasingly important for the AONB Partnership to secure external funding to deliver project work on the ground, particularly if there are ongoing reductions in core budget.
- 18.7. The Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust, registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2015, sits alongside the AONB Partnership. Whilst an independent organisation, its purposes align closely with those of the Partnership. The Trust may be able to access funding currently not available to local authority partners.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
F	Secure resources are in place to support the core	F1	Undertake an assessment of current and future resource

	<p>functions and project aspirations of the AONB Partnership throughout this Plan period and beyond</p>		<p>requirements to devise a future strategy to attract additional external funding to achieve objectives throughout this Plan period and beyond</p>
		<p>F2</p>	<p>All funding partners transfer their agreed percentage contribution to the core budget each year, as set out in the AONB Partnership Agreement</p>
		<p>F3</p>	<p>Work with the National Association of AONBs and Defra towards a long term, secure funding commitment</p>
		<p>F4</p>	<p>Support the Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust to submit external funding bids, secure donations and/or consider alternative income raising opportunities to help achieve AONB purposes, including a visitor contribution scheme</p>
		<p>F5</p>	<p>Actively seek funding, and partnership working, from non Local Authority partner organisations for specific core and project work, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards</p>
		<p>F6</p>	<p>Actively engage with future UK/English rural development initiatives national initiatives to secure funding for appropriate project work</p>

19. Implementation

Who implements the Management Plan?

- 19.1. The whole Partnership has a key role to implement this ambitious Management Plan through individual actions as well as partnership working. Successful implementation is beyond the resources of just the Partnership or AONB team alone. Whilst the team takes a lead in much of the implementation work and initiates new and innovative projects, it is the responsibility and duty of all partners to take positive action to conserve and enhance the AONB and seek additional partners.
- 19.2. This Plan does not identify all the activities and people involved in its delivery; it is a framework for action. A separate **Partnership Delivery Plan** will set out work to be undertaken under themes, for the 5 years covered by the Plan. The small AONB team may have the role of facilitator or advocate for some of that work, whilst leading in other areas. However, significant parts of the Delivery Plan will only be effectively delivered with the assistance of current, and future, partner organisations, working together in an integrated way to achieve multiple objectives. The creation of a field-based team may be one way to deliver a number of actions arising from the policies in this management plan.
- 19.3. It is recognised that it is essential to involve partners fully in agreeing actions, responsibilities and resource allocations to secure their genuine commitment to Management Plan tasks that require their involvement. The Delivery Plan is reviewed each year, to reflect any uncertainties regarding future policy and funding and enable the Partnership to be flexible in how it responds to the challenges and opportunities presented.
- 19.4. While the profile of the AONB is improving over time, there remains a general 'disconnect' between the AONB Partnership and Team and local communities and visitors. The Partnership Delivery Plan will include considerable work to increase awareness and understanding of the AONB, implement practical work on the ground and closer working with local communities, landowners and farmers. There is also a rapidly growing body of volunteers both within and outside the area. It will be increasingly important to engage, support and manage volunteers to assist with delivering work programmes.
- 19.5. By helping to implement this Plan, government, local authorities, public bodies and other 'relevant authorities' will be contributing to their 'Section 85' duty to "have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB". It is important that the strategies, plans and action plans of key local, regional and national authorities, agencies and organisations take account of and reflect the vision, objectives and policies of this plan.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
I	All current and potential partner organisations are committed to and involved with the achievement of Management Plan objectives	I1	Foster closer working relationships with local authority officers and members to ensure understanding of management plan objectives and integration of work where appropriate
		I2	Ensure the work of theme-based groups is closely focused on achieving relevant management plan objectives
		I3	Establish and maintain close relationships with external organisations and bodies, both public and private, whose programmes of work could support the delivery of management plan objectives
		I4	Strengthen and support working relationships with local parishes, communities, landowners, volunteers and other stakeholders to improve local delivery of management plan objectives
		I5	Explore new ways of working to deliver the actions arising from the policies in this plan

20. Monitoring and Evaluation

20.1. Monitoring and evaluation of this Management Plan and the actions outlined within the Delivery Plan is an essential task for the AONB Team and is grant-aided as part of the core activities undertaken. There are essentially two types of monitoring work:

- **Performance monitoring** - to establish whether actions outlined within the AONB Delivery Plan have been undertaken. This is an important activity and will be reported on a regular basis to the AONB Partnership and Partnership Forum. An Annual Report will summarise the activities of both the AONB Team and partners. It will include details of the tasks undertaken, the effect upon the AONB (outcomes) and the funding and other resources employed.
- **Condition monitoring** - to establish if actions undertaken have had the desired effect, or impact, on the AONB. To monitor condition effectively, initial base line information is required in order that comparisons can be made and an evaluation of change over time. Some base line data is currently held by the AONB.

20.2. Monitoring and evaluation requires resources and it is therefore crucial that those attributes, or features, of the AONB that are a meaningful measure of AONB quality are chosen. These form a suite of indicators that can be measured, monitored and evaluated over time.

20.3. A Monitoring Framework for Protected Landscapes was developed by Natural England to provide a consistent framework for measuring environmental outcomes in protected areas. It provided evidence to inform the next review the AONB Management Plan, review the 'State of the AONB' and demonstrate the benefits of protected landscape designation. However, due to reductions in NE resources, the provision of the data from Natural England will cease after 2018.

20.4. Indicators have been chosen and set out for each of the ten chapters in this Plan, for the following reasons:

- they focus on the primary reasons for designation ie landscape, special qualities, natural and historic environment and management of land
- the data can be cut to the AONB boundary
- they add to baseline data for measuring the 'State of the AONB'
- they add to evidence required for funding bids
- desired indicators that will only be acquired through additional resources (£) or with the assistance of volunteers (*vols*). (*The latter indicators are in italics.*)

Landscape:

- Changes identified through analysis of fixed point photography at a minimum of every five years (AONB)

- Land use change (Defra)
- Take up of relevant themed groups of Environmental Stewardship (ES) options that contribute to conserving and enhancing landscape character (£)
- *Change in % of AONB recorded as 'most tranquil' (£/vols)*
- Changes in extent of dark night skies (*mapped using light meter readings taken by volunteers across the AONB*)
- Length of overhead power cables laid underground (SSE)

Natural Environment:

- Number and capacity of renewable energy applications permitted/constructed (LAs)
- Change in ecological status of rivers and surface water bodies (EA)
- *Change in % of protected landscape managed under ES agreements (£)*
- *Change in total annual values of old and new AE schemes in AONB (£)*
- *% change in condition of SSSIs (£s)*
- *Area of broad and priority habitats within AONB (£s)*
- *Frequency and abundance of farmland bird species at selected holdings (£/vol recorders)*
- *Existence of rare arable plants identified in 2011 survey as potential 'hot spots' (£/vols)*

Historic and Cultural Environment:

- Change in number of heritage assets (EH)
- Change in number of heritage assets 'at risk' (EH)
- *Change in ES area for the management and protection of archaeological features (£)*
- Number of Conservation Areas with Conservation Area Appraisals (District Councils)
- Number of readily accessible HERs (County Councils)
- *Increase in awareness of, and involvement in, cultural environment (£/vols)*

Rural Land Management:

- Changes in farmland type (arable/grazing etc) (Defra)
- Changes in farm numbers / sizes / employment (Defra)
- Changes in numbers of livestock (Defra)
- Changes in total area of woodland (subdivided) (FC)
- Changes in area of woodland managed (including EWGS/felling licences)

(FC)

- *Changes to game and pest management practices (£/vols)*

Rural Economy:

- *Changes in tourism related business performance (£/vols)*
- *Changes in number of businesses taking up green/dark sky/other accreditation (£/vols)*
- *Performance of LEADER funded business projects (£/vols)*
- *Repeat of Economic Survey of AONB (£)*

Planning and Transportation:

- Change in % of Local Authority adopted Plans (Local Plans, Minerals and Waste Plans) or strategies with specific reference to AONB Management Plan/policies (AONB)
- Change in number of relevant/major applications coming to AONB for comment (AONB)
- Availability of Design Guidance (District / Unitary Councils)
- Change in number of parishes/groups of parishes with Neighbourhood Plans (LAs/AONB)
- *Number of applications where, after response from AONB Partnership, positive change has occurred relating to designation purpose (£/vols)*

Viable Rural Communities:

- Change in Parish Facilities and Services (County / Unitary Councils)
- Number of Neighbourhood Plans published (LAs/AONB)
- *Number of community projects applying for external funding / successful (£/vols)*

Awareness and Understanding:

- *Changes in number of survey respondents aware of designation, purpose, 'highly valuing' the CCWWD AONB (£/vols)*
- Change in number of 'followers' / active participants in social media channels (AONB)
- Change in numbers of enquiries for information, presentations, assistance (AONB)
- Number taking up Information Pack for parishes/councillors (AONB)
- Change in the number of stories/features published in local/national media (AONB)

Involvement and Learning:

- Number of volunteers engaged in assisting the AONB (AONB)
- Number of people attending guided walks and events organised by/through AONB (AONB)

Access and Wellbeing:

- *Number/length/condition of countryside access (County Councils/£ vols)*
- *Number of volunteers actively engaged in access work (County Councils/AONB vols)*
- *Satisfaction from visitor / resident surveys (£/vols)*
- *NHS health indicators (vols)*

Compliance note to accompany the AONB Management Plan 2019-24

(to be completed in published copy)