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April 2018

Dear Board Member

## **Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

### **Dorchester Cricket Pavilion, off Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester**

The cricket pavilion is located off Weymouth Avenue to the south of Dorchester's town centre, a short walk from Dorchester South Railway station and close to Fairfield Car Park. There is limited parking on-site (use DT1 2RZ for SatNav to take you onto Sawmills Lane; the building is the first on the left having turned off Weymouth Ave).

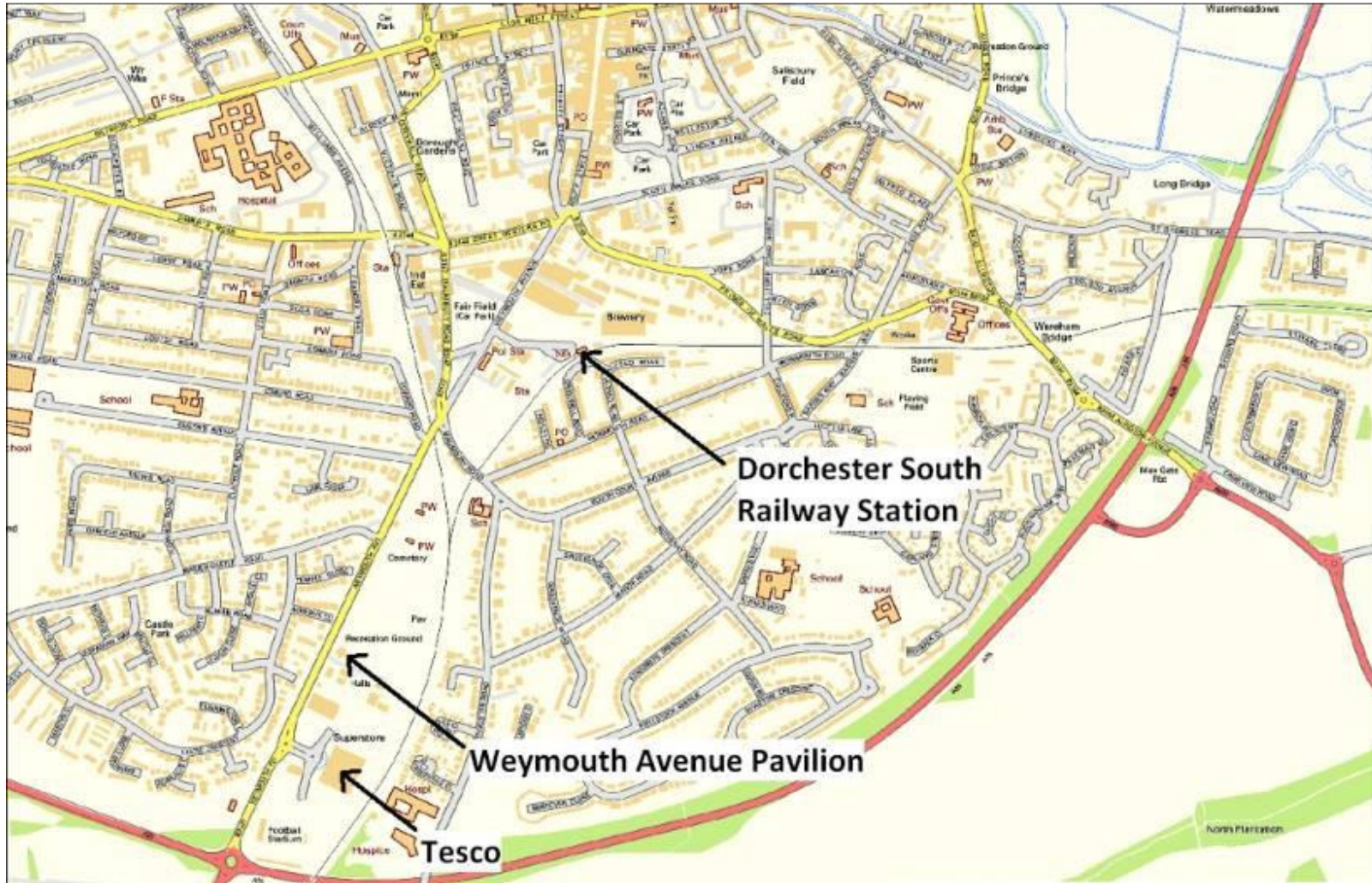
The meeting will start at 10.00 am sharp, with refreshments from 9.30am. If you are unable to attend it would be helpful if you could send a briefed representative or an update. Please send apologies to Tom Munro on [t.munro@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:t.munro@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

## **AGENDA**

### **Welcome, introductions and apologies**

- 1 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**
- 2 Delivering the AONB Management Plan** (information)
- 3 2017-2018 Finance report** (information)
- 4 Management Plan Review** (decision & consultation)
- 5 South Dorset Ridgeway** (presentation; information)
- 6 25 Year Environment Plan / Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit** (information)
- 7 Local Government Review** (verbal update; information)
- 8 2-minute Partner updates**
- 9 Proposed dates of next meetings:**

Partnership Board 2018:	15 <sup>th</sup> November
Steering Group 2018:	16 <sup>th</sup> October



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# ITEM 1: MINUTES of the last Partnership Board meeting (16th November 2017, Dorchester Cricket Pavilion)

## **Present:**

**Chairman:** Jim White (also Dorset Local Nature Partnership - LNP)

## **Local Authority Members:**

Cllr Peter Webb (Purbeck District Council), Cllr Susie Hosford (West Dorset District Council)

## **Sector representatives:**

Robert Lasseter & Louise Stratton (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Rupert Best (Country Land and Business Association - CLA), Sam Rose (Jurassic Coast Trust)

## **Defra family officers:**

Matt Low (Natural England)

## **Local Authority officers:**

Alison Turnock (Purbeck District Council - PDC), Hilary Jordan (West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland and North Dorset District Council), Janet Page (Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils - DAPTC), Phil Sterling (Dorset County Council - DCC)

**DAONB Team:** Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), James Sharpe (South Dorset Ridgeway Project Manager), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature Project Officer), Katharine Wright (Dorset Food & Drink Coordinator), Kiera Diment (Dorset Food & Drink Support), Marie McLeish (South Dorset Ridgeway Learning Projects Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Sue Dampney (Communications Officer), Theresa McManus (Project Support), Tom Munro (AONB Manager)

## **Guests:**

David Collins (Dorset Food & Drink), Neil Watson (Environment Agency),

## **Apologies:**

Alison Moore (Local Enterprise Partnership - LEP), Brian Bleese (Purbeck Heritage Network), Cllr Audrey Burch (North Dorset District Council), Cllr Deidre Skipwith (North Dorset), Cllr Hilary Cox (Dorset County Council), Cllr Ray Nowak (Weymouth Council), Ian Alexander (Natural England), Jill Hearing (South Dorset Ridgeway Project Officer), Katy Menday (South Somerset Council), Paula Hewitt (Somerset County Council), Peter Chamberlain (Devon County Council), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Rob Rhodes (National Trust), Sarah Harris (South Dorset Ridgeway Support Officer), Will Langer (CLA)

## **Absent:**

Ben Rayner (Environment Agency), Charlie Plowden (East Devon Council), Charlotte Sealy (CLA), Cllr Catharine Langham, Matt Hall, Roderick Knight (Dorset Natural Heritage & Archaeological Society), Ross Simonds (English Heritage), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature Support),

## **CC:**

Maria Clarke (LNP), Peter Moore (DCC)

1. Election of chair

Robert Lasseater (RL) proposed and Rupert Best (RB) seconded Jim White (JW) to continue as chair.

2. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Tom Munro (TM) introduced three new members of the team – Keira Diment supporting Dorset Food & Drink, Steph Aburrow supporting Stepping into Nature, and Theresa McManus in the core team support role.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

**Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct.**

4. Partner updates

**Dorset Councils Partnership:** Hilary Jordan provided an update on the council's response to the Secretary of State's announcement that he is minded to approve the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) with a decision expected on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018.

**North Dorset District Local Plan** An issues and options consultation is planned to run from 27/11 – 2/1.

**West Dorset & Weymouth Local Plan** update: currently finalising 2<sup>nd</sup> stage preferred options to go to public consultation June – August 2018.

**Purbeck District Council:** Cllr Peter Webb spoke of the importance of the role of the AONB in Purbeck District Council's revised proposals being put forward for consultation in new year. He noted that the number of new houses required to be included in the proposals has been reduced, but that some areas of undesignated green belt may still be put under pressure.

He added that there is a requirement for a Statement of Common Ground to be established across the local authorities affected by the LGR, which may have strategic planning repercussions across all Dorset.

**Purbeck Heritage Network:** Alison Turnock provided some updates on behalf of Brian Bleese: the National Trust and Dorset Wildlife Trust are working together on an initiative to widen access and participation on Brownsea Island; 'Wild Brownsea' will enable more people, of all backgrounds and abilities, to learn about, enjoy and benefit from Brownsea's unique natural heritage and establish the infrastructure and community support that is vital for the future sustainability of this iconic nature reserve.

Holes Bay Nature Park initiative involves a broad range of stakeholders working together to ensure that Holes Bay and its surroundings remain a great place for nature and wildlife and also a great place to live and work. The stakeholder group, which includes businesses, local authorities and voluntary and statutory conservation bodies, has agreed in principle to a Memorandum of Agreement that will include the development of a joint management plan for Holes Bay.

Dorset Coastal Connections is a Coastal Communities Funded initiative, led by the Dorset Coast Forum. Several projects fall under this umbrella in Purbeck, including:

- Kimmeridge Welcome Hub – led by Dorset Wildlife Trust will transform the Marine Centre at Kimmeridge Bay into a gateway to Dorset's marine environment and suite of MPAs.
- Norden Welcome Hub - The project will take place within the site of Norden Car Park linking to Swanage railway, Swanage and Studland. The funding will be used to enhance the car parking area and redevelop the area around the main hub of the site. The project aims to improve the car park surfacing and visitor experience by providing new and improve services to this area, including refreshments, digital connectivity and family activities.

There have been public consultations on both projects.

**Natural England:** Matt Low emphasised that the countryside stewardship scheme is still the main mechanism for getting funding for countryside management. The new team leader, Hannah Wood, will be taking over the Dorset Coast team, replacing Dee Stephens, who is now leading on the section 41 endangered species project. Matt also praised Sally's work, bringing together disparate interests, on the Fossil Forest project.

**DAPTC:** Janet Page expressed concerns over the potential impact of the LGR on Parish and Town Councils, specifically around the devolution of responsibilities for tourism, economic development, grants, tourism and management of public streetscapes and greenspaces. Phil Sterling (PS) responded by saying that any changes to delivery should be developed collaboratively. Janet enquired about the role of the AONB in developing Neighbourhood Plans, as more and more of these plans are being developed. TM advised that the AONB role is advisory. It includes drafting exemplar policies and signposting to others who can also provide support. Janet reminded the AONB team of the efficacy of the DAPTC network having recently won a national award won for work disseminating information. The board offered their congratulations.

**Kingston Maurwood Estate:** Robert Lasseter (RL) advised that the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board have published a report on the implications of Brexit upon the sector:- [https://ahdb.org.uk/brexit/documents/Horizon\\_BrexitScenarios\\_Web\\_2017-10-16.pdf](https://ahdb.org.uk/brexit/documents/Horizon_BrexitScenarios_Web_2017-10-16.pdf). In all scenarios explored in the report, farming would be worse off post-Brexit. Extrapolating from this, it can be expected that this will necessitate changes in farming which will affect the landscape, as well as a sharp increase in demand for labour/skills.

There has been a great deal of adverse publicity from animal welfare groups who have widely published photos of intensive livestock production in Dorset. Issues around CO<sup>2</sup> emissions have also been raised.

An Estate Heritage Plan has been prepared for the Kingston Maurward estate. The College and Studio School have recently had good Ofsted reports, with a strategy in place to take that to Outstanding. This includes seeking funding to enhance the teaching facility at the dairy.

**Jurassic Coast Trust:** Sam Rose provided an update on the development of the Trust, which has taken on the WHS staff team following their transition from Dorset County Council. This has necessitated new systems, some recruitment, new trustees, a new plan, new offices, and coming soon a new logo. There is a new steering group process with a Management Plan Advisory Committee and a new relationship with Natural England. The team are still working very closely with the AONB team, particularly Sally on visitor management and Richard on development management. The Trust is preparing for the arrival of Dippy from the Natural History Museum (10<sup>th</sup> Feb at Dorset County Museum), planning lots of events both at the coast and inland to celebrate this natural history adventure in Dorset.

**Dorset County Council:** PS is now in charge of staff from the Dorset County Council farm estate. Some of these farms are in the AONB. Phil expects that his Coast and Countryside portfolio will give broader support to the farms than just economic.

RL noted that Neville & Suzanne Loder (Sherborne) won dairy farmer of the year 2017.

PS also encouraged developing new, deeper and wider partnerships with DAPTC and its members around greenspace management.

**National Trust:** Marie McLeish announced that Hannah Jefferson has been appointed the new General Manager for North and West Dorset. She is currently the Operations Manager of the Studland Estate, and will bring a lot of experience to the team. Rob Rhodes has been promoted to national role as Head of Countryside and Rangers.

**Country Land and Business Association:** Rupert Best discussed the ideas being developed by CLA for replacing the Common Agricultural Policy with a system of land management contracts, each a tailored agreement for activities relevant for the farmer, making clear what payments they would receive, and what outcomes are expected for the natural services being managed. CLA press release and link to details:

<https://www.cla.org.uk/influence/all-news/time-change-farm-support-say-rural-landowners>

RB requested that the Dorset & East Devon National Park proposal be considered as a major point of discussion in next Partnership Board Meeting. There was general agreement that the AONB Partnership has a role to facilitate a full and informed discussion on the proposal.

**Action:** The Steering Group will review situation for the May meeting.

**NFU:** Louise Stratton described how the NFU are focussing on developing a new domestic agricultural policy with three key areas; the environment, productivity and volatility. Existing policy is being reviewed with the aim of addressing weaknesses. An Agricultural Bill is expected to be published at end of this year, which presents a great opportunity for refining our national policy. LS agreed with RL's assessment of the threat Brexit poses to the landscape as different sectors face differing fortunes, not all negative – for example, potatoes may see a positive impact. She also described NFU's work with the Dorset Rural Enterprise Group (sub-group of the LEP) and the two Local Action Groups.

**Environment Agency:** Neil Watson said that the agency has been reviewing natural flood management with respect to flood mitigation; storing water in agricultural areas, managing flows and runoff. He observed that river catchments like that of the Frome may lend themselves to being adapted in this way.

**LNP:** Dorset's ecological networks have been mapped and are available online on the LNP website, [https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/ecological\\_networks.html](https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/ecological_networks.html). A position paper on climate change has also been published on the website at [https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/Dorset\\_LNP\\_Position\\_Papers.html](https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/Dorset_LNP_Position_Papers.html). Initiatives are underway on environment and health. The Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism attended a meeting reinforcing links to health and wellbeing and environment. The Annual Forum for the LNP will be 21/2/2018. The theme may be the government's plans for the environment, food and farming. The Annual Forum is open to all.

## 5. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

The AONB team presented on delivery.

The May Partnership Board meeting will feature the South Dorset Ridgeway project as this is the last scheduled meeting before the project finishes.

The Dorset Food and Drink annual Xmas fair will be at Athelhampton House from 10 – 4 on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England has launched a fingerpost fund for which could be useful match funding. [The South West Rural Commission Report](#) into rural productivity report has been published.

**RESOLUTION: The Board approved and noted progress on Management Plan delivery with congratulations to the team.**

## 6. Budget Headlines

Summary - DF&D, SDR, Si2N, fingerposts, and community woodland are to share £42K of the current surplus leaving £25K to the Sustainable Development Fund with some funding for the Management Plan Review and the proposal development for Marshwood Vales and Hillforts.

The AONB team are also working to secure more visual impact funding from the National Grid. Approved and detail to be filled in in due course.

**RESOLUTION: The Board approved the outline budget.**

## 7. Management Plan Review

Tom walked through the schedule and plan for the Management Plan Review. Sam Rose will be reviewing the Jurassic Coast management plan in same kind of timeframe. SR and TM will meet to discuss synergising.

It is planned to use the Rural Enterprise Group to engage with relevant commercial organisations.

**RESOLUTION: The Board approved the plan and thanked the AONB team.**

## **8. Arne Moors**

Arne Moors are located between the Arne peninsular and the settlement at Ridge, and bordered by Poole Harbour and Frome. Poole & Wareham Flood & Coastal Risk Management Strategy 2015 requires managed coastal realignment to address the risk to people, property and infrastructure. It has been assessed that there are around 70 properties at risk of flooding by 2100. Around the Frome/Piddle estuaries there is coastal squeeze and the preferred option is to realign the coast to allow a large area of Arne Moors (200ha) to become a new intertidal area as a compensatory habitat. Two other sites were also considered: Lytchett Bay, and Keyworth. Arne Moors is owned largely by the RSPB and some by Natural England. This land is already liable to flooding. Areas within the site that require flood protection will be protected by a new embankment. The timeline is that the options will be agreed in spring, full planning permission applied for in summer 18, and late 2021 for construction. There has been a high level of local engagement providing an opportunity to discuss the causes of current flooding, which is due to ground water levels.

## **9. Dorset Food & Drink**

David Collins is one of 9 directors. He moved to Dorset only in 2012. David thanked Katharine and Tom for their amazing efforts in getting DF&D so well established in such a short time frame.

Dorset Food & Drink (DF&D) was set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) earlier this year. The board was set up over the summer. It is felt that the level of industry support needs to be beefed up. The CIC will be offering Trade Association features, as well as support for tourism and hospitality.

A membership scheme is being developed to provide some income as is a corporate sponsorship scheme and end user subscription.

The website is to be redeveloped, supporting membership as well as providing a public (consumer) face. The website will also replace the paper-based guide.

The established Dorset events will continue, e.g. Christchurch Food & Drink, Weymouth Seafood, Athelhampton, but promotion will now extend beyond Dorset, starting with the Source exhibition in Exeter.

## **10. AOB**

Fly tipping was raised as an issue which appears to be worsening. Enhancing the look of a place should deter littering and fly tipping. Any organisation could come to the AONB for SDF funding if they have an idea of how to combat it. The AONB team also works with Litter Free Dorset. The NFU are currently looking at litter issues with Oliver Letwin in West Dorset.

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018** (venue to be confirmed)

Anyone wishing to raise agenda items should do so by email to [t.munro@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:t.munro@dorsetcc.gov.uk) by 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018, following which any suggestions will be considered by the AONB Steering Group.

### **Dates of the all key meetings in 2018**

Partnership Board 2018: 17<sup>th</sup> May & 22<sup>nd</sup> November

Steering Group 2018: 17<sup>th</sup> April & 16<sup>th</sup> October

## ITEM 2: Delivering the Management Plan: progress report

Item for: Information

Report by: AONB Team

Summary: The AONB team is leading, coordinating, promoting and supporting delivery of the actions and intent of the AONB Management Plan as the central part of its core duties and through specific projects.

Financial implications: Delivery based on agreed budget and business plan.

Recommendation: The Board approves and notes the progress made towards delivering the AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

### 2.1. Action area reporting

The table on the following page shows Defra's expectations of an AONB staff unit and the report headings under which those functions are reported.

		CORE WORK	Dorset Food & Drink	South Dorset Ridgeway LPS	Wild Purbeck NIA legacy	Rural Roads	Stepping into Nature	AONB Character / Condition Assment	Magical Marshwood	Community Woodlands	Low Carbon Biomass	JC Visitor Management
<b>Defra's core functions of an AONB staff unit</b>												
a	Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the CRoW Act AONB Management Plan											
b	Promoting the AONB vision and management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside											
c	Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan											
d	Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service(attain the highest possible standards) in countryside management											
e	Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets											
f	Monitoring AONB landscape condition											
g	Accessing resources for management activities											
h	Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally											
i	Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level.											
j	Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB											
k	Providing landscape related planning advice											

### 2.2. AONB team

- a. Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature Support Officer) has been appointed to Project Assistant for the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership team to replace Sarah Harris. This means she is now with the team full time.



- b. Theresa McManus has left the team after 6 months as the Dorset AONB Support Officer. She settled in well to the team and her departure is a real loss. Interviews for replacement are to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> May.

## **CORE WORK**

### **2.3. Providing landscape-related planning advice via the Planning Protocol:**

- a. Over 180 consultations were received during 2017/18, which was the highest number recorded within a single year to date.
- b. National Grid undergrounding application has been submitted and we have submitted a response supporting the proposal.
- c. Proposals for housing at Lower Bryanston Farm are being considered, with the number of dwellings that can be accommodated being a key issue.
- d. The Partial Review of the Purbeck Plan continues. Recent changes have largely been positive in reducing the potential effects on the AONB. However, concern remains about a proposed 'small sites' policy that could result in numerous speculative applications affecting smaller towns and villages.
- e. Reviews of strategic housing allocations across the AONB are ongoing, through the Partial Reviews of the Local Plans of the major composite district and borough authorities.
- f. Dorset County Council's Minerals Site Plan is going to be examined in June.
- g. Planning appeals are currently being responded to regarding beach huts at the Pines Hotel, Swanage, and a phone mast on land adjacent to Steepton Bill Farm, Milton Abbas.

### **2.4. Accessing resources / project development**

- a. The AONB Team has steering input to the following strategic organisations which we anticipate could be a source of funds for conserving and enhancing the AONB
  - Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Rural Enterprise Group / Dorset Destination Management Organisation)
  - Southern Dorset Local Action Group
- b. **National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative:** South Dorset Ridgeway / "the rest". This bid (for nearly £200,000) is currently being considered by OFGEM, having passed the previous 2 approval stages.
- c. **INTERREG VA (Channel):** Sally attended a workshop in Paris on Channel Manche Targeted Tourism Project, seeking to share project ideas between potential partners, focusing on natural and cultural assets to deliver innovative and sustainable growth. We have submitted an 'Intervention Logic Document' (a detailed project plan). Lead partners have been appointed by the Secretariat; we hope to be included as a project partner in initiatives around food tourism and walking/cycling routes.
- d. **Heritage Lottery Fund:**
  - The team is continuing to build a landscape scale conservation project in the Marshwood Vale with the Heritage Lottery Fund the likely target for majority funding. HLF are currently reviewing their grant programmes (Landscape Partnerships are closed to new applicants); we plan to be an early applicant into a new programme.
  - The team is considering a relatively small-scale bid (<£50,000) to support the fingerpost project

### **2.5. National Association for AONBs / Protected Landscapes collaboration**

- a. The NAAONB Chairman's Conference was on 23<sup>rd</sup> November The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference took place on Thursday 23rd November 2017 in London. The Chairmen's Conference built on the work from the previous year, focusing on 'Brexit and Landscape'. In the morning, attendees heard from The Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Under Secretary of State, DEFRA among others who underlined his awe at what the AONB Family achieves and his ongoing support for it.
- b. TM attended the Lead Officers' meeting in February at which the following items were discussed:

- Future of agri-environment schemes post-Brexit, with a number of AONB teams committing to undertake ‘pilots’ or ‘tests’ of a new Environmental Land Management scheme
  - Management Plan reviews, with a clear direction from Defra to incorporate natural capital language and concepts.
- c. SD attended a SW Communications Officers’ meeting in Devon with a focus on
- a #WeAreOutstanding campaign alongside Outstanding Week (15th – 23rd September) and to highlight consultations on Management Plans across the region
  - Countryfile Live event in August
  - Outstanding Hour (Wednesdays 1pm – 2pm on Twitter)

2.6. **Promotion of the AONB: Events & publications**

- a. The 40 Days publication is in review for a spring/summer reprint
- b. Drawing Inspiration and Pedals routes are being re-tested for renewal of the most appropriate

2.7. **Promotion of the AONB: Website & social media**

- a. The team is making efforts fulfil requirements for GDPR compliance. This is likely to reduce the numbers of newsletter recipients.
- b. Regular newsletters continue to be circulated to c6000 members of the public and local organisations, with news of events, training, activities and project updates. This mailing list is developed through sign ups at public events and through AONB Team contacts.
- c. Social media following
  - 7,287 followers @DorsetAONB
  - 21,400 followers @DorsetFoodDrink; 1759 followers on DF&D Facebook page
  - 1,922 followers @LandBoneStone
  - 372 followers @StepIn2Nature; 106 followers on [Facebook page](#)
- d. South Dorset Ridgeway Partnership has a Land of Bone & Stone Flickr gallery, (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/131152284@N07/albums>) providing a comprehensive record of activity including guided walks and volunteer events. A regular SDRLP e-newsletter is sent to a mailing list of over 1,000 with details of forthcoming events.
- e. Stepin2nature.org is the projects new URL and we are in the process of developing new webpages on Dorset AONB website.

2.8. **Monitoring AONB condition:**

- a. Environment Systems have been contracted to undertake land use analysis by Landscape Character Area. A consortium of contributors has been put together to support this work across and beyond the AONB
- b. A Dorset Explorer layer has been created to allow access to the images and to show their relationship with the AONB’s landscape character areas: <https://explorer.geowessex.com/lca>
- c. Further progress has been made with photographic monitoring, with additional locations towards the Piddle Valley and North Dorset. Images can be viewed online at [http://gigapan.com/profiles/Dorset\\_AONB](http://gigapan.com/profiles/Dorset_AONB) & [http://gigapan.com/profiles/Dorset\\_AONB\\_2](http://gigapan.com/profiles/Dorset_AONB_2). Many of the images have also been added to Dorset Explorer, enabling a map-based view of locations across the AONB.

**DORSET AONB PROJECTS**

2.9. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership:** Conserving and restoring built heritage (including ancient monuments) in the South Dorset Ridgeway’s ancient ceremonial landscape

- a. Working with SDR Partners Dorset Countryside Ranger Service and EuCan our volunteers have laid over 1km of hedgerow this winter, achieving our target (of 2km laid) for the Landscape Partnership. The greater outcome for us however, is the number of people who have learned this heritage skill, contributed to the conservation & enhancement of landscape heritage and thoroughly enjoyed the experience!

- b. Approximately half of the traditional, black & white roadside fingerposts have now been restored with support from the SDR LP. We will see how many more we can complete before the close of our HLF grant term in September.
  - c. Dry stone walling takes a back seat over the winter but continues to be very popular and will pick up in spring/summer 2018.
- 2.10. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership:** Conserving and restoring priority habitats, species and other natural heritage
- a. A 1ha site has been drilled with a local chalk flora mix, supported through our Small Grants Scheme. However, our Small Grants Programme remains very undersubscribed.
  - b. FWAG have run 13 Carbon Club meetings to date; these are well attended by Ridgeway farmers and recent topics have included practical methods of carbon storage and emission reduction for arable and livestock systems. 50% of Ridgeway farmers have engaged with FWAG projects to date.
  - c. This summer the Dorset Wildlife Trust will undertake bank re-profiling, planting and other interventions in sections of the South Winterbourne to restore its natural character.
- 2.11. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership:** Increasing participation in local heritage - management and celebration
- a. Our volunteers' work in surveying and updating the Heritage at Risk Register was highlighted by Historic England, using our work as a case study in their annual publication as well as their press releases.
  - b. We initiated a series of events & surveys (22) looking at the locally distinct built heritage of the Ridgeway's villages. These have been very well received by local people, other outcomes will include survey reports for each village and a number of small community projects restoring built features.
  - c. To date nearly 100 people have completed flora/wildlife id training days.
  - d. Our second Barnes Supper was a great success with SDR Partner ArtsReach.
  - e. We are working with Partner Windrose Rural Media Trust to deliver a 'late to start' project. Participants will record thoughts, memories and hopes for SDR, celebrating the history and heritage of the SDR through stories, opinions, experiences and memories. So far 74 people have been interviewed, 215 people have participated in the project, 22 audio pieces produced and 2 film shows presented.
  - f. 22 volunteers were trained to undertake surveys of veteran trees which are under-recorded in the Ridgeway.
- 2.12. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership:** Improving access to the South Dorset Ridgeway heritage
- a. Sculptures are complete and all works completed on new Black Down car park, except laying tarmac at entrance. This is held up due to difficulty obtaining Forest Marble kerb stones.
  - b. To date 56 guided walks have been held, led by experts and volunteers, engaging nearly 1,000 participants with the archaeology, geology and wildlife of the Ridgeway.
- 2.13. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership:** Increasing understanding of the SDR heritage through formal and informal learning opportunities:
- a. C17 Pick It Up & Pass it On (our programme for schools) - The delivery of this project is fast approaching completion, 30 Sept 2018. Good progress continues to be sustained, many targets are more than 100% achieved many well below planned budget. This has given scope to produce additional and much needed resources for schools.
  - b. Learning Projects reach
    - 50 schools
    - 10,600 schoolchildren
    - 217 teachers trained, and reaching a further 400
    - 740 school governors

- 36,700 community members
  - 82 SDR focussed lesson plans
  - 15 SDR experts working with teachers
  - 4 school festivals reaching 798 schoolchildren.
- c. Publicity & Promotion– Next highlights for media release
  - d. 15 -24 June SDR legacy events
  - e. 11 September SDR Project, DAONB & Partner celebration
  - f. 19 September School Fest, in partnership with IO Dorset
  - g. Monitoring & Evaluation – Planning work with learning delivery partners underway, and report content is being produced.

2.14. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership:** Developing skills in heritage management:

- a. To date, 34 volunteers have each committed over 20 days to practical conservation on the project, including 9 who have committed 40 hours or more and 2 who have committed over 80 hours. To date, 9 volunteer rangers have received training in use of power tools (3 brushcutter, 2 chainsaw, and 4 in both).
- b. Our final two of eight Apprentice Countryside Rangers continue to do well, both have undertaken chainsaw training (additional to their standard apprenticeship but essential professional qualification).

2.15. **Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area**

- a. The Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Enhancement Fund panel received its first applications. Grants have been offered to two on-farm projects, largely enhancing hedgerows, and £200,000 has been set aside by the panel for non-car access projects between Norden and Studland. An offer will be made on approval of a detailed application.
- b. Future panel meetings have been set: 18th July, 26th September 2018 and 20th March 2019.

2.16. **Dorset Food & Drink**

- a. Business members now total 200; we continue to support all with industry information, event invitations, and support and advice and promote them through various channels.
- b. DF&D now has a board of directors (total of 9) for the DF&D Community Interest Company. The board is seeking an able chairman.
- c. The DF&D trip to the House of Parliament to showcase the food and drink of North Dorset with Simon Hoare MP, has been set for the 5<sup>th</sup> September.
- d. New membership packages have been developed:
  - Corporate Partner – high profile supporting positions for non-food businesses
  - Gold membership – high profile membership for Dorset-based food & drink businesses
  - Classic membership – a standard membership package for retailers, producers, wholesalers, cookery schools, etc. Charges are dependent on business turnover.
  - Hospitality membership – a flat-rate fee for the hospitality sector (pubs, restaurants, B&B, etc)
  - Associate membership – for businesses which offer services to the food and drink sector in Dorset (e.g. print and design, PR, web services)
- e. We continue liaising with Visit Dorset & the Dorset Tourism Association, offering great opportunities for the members and improving Dorset’s visitor offer. We also continue to act as voice for DF&D members at LNP, LEP, DTA, Northern & Southern LAG, and the Growth Hub

2.17. **Stepping into Nature**

- a. Project budget is slightly underspent this financial year
- b. 145 activities have been delivered or plan to be delivered by the end of 2017 with 605 attendees.
- c. Evaluation Guide with Public Health Dorset finalised and available on line or by request.

- d. The project has been presented to over 595 people (the majority of these in the health sector); 82 people have received dementia awareness training with more sessions booked in. An April roadshow was undertaken to promote the activities available.
- e. £6k of the Community pot has been awarded to: (bringing around £5k in-kind)
  - Dorset Wildlife Trust - Greengage (Ecotherapy) Project
  - Langton Matravers Friends of the Woodland Trail - Preparation of Orchard & Woodland Trail
  - Dorset Wildlife Trust - Chesil Centre - Chesil beach boardwalk animal carvings
  - Bridport Millennium Green Trust - Greater Accessibility & Publicity of BMG
  - Dorset Forest Schools - Greenwood Club Holton Lee
- f. Wider reach:
  - Presented to LNP Forum
  - Presentation to Wessex Public Health Conference 22nd March
  - Walking for health Groups in Weymouth & North Dorset
  - National Trust – Studland & Dementia Adventure on the Dynamic Dunescapes project in Studland. (learning from what we have done through SiN)
- g. Forest Schools received £49k funding to deliver more Greenwood Club at Holton Lee, piloted by this project.
- h. More information can be found on the AONB website <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/our-work/health-and-wellbeing>
- i. NaturalChoices & Healthy Places project around Prevention at Scale

#### 2.18. Dorset Fingerposts

- a. The project continues to go from strength to strength, with good and reliable systems in place to make the process easier and sometime quicker! With over 500 posts being restored/restored across the County.

#### 2.19. Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: People and Places Coastal Communities Fund Project (2017 – 2019)

- a. Fossil Forest access and interpretation: reinstating of steps and railings agreed by all stakeholders, together with siting of interpretation, 28th March 2018. This was swiftly followed by a substantial rockfall which put stop to all plans. Vertical Technologies (geotechnical rope experts) will visit site 11th May and produce a report on findings and recommendations. Future progress depends on outcomes of this report. If the decision is to continue, the earliest the site would be re-opened is Easter 2019, due to limited range opening times and lead in time for materials.
- b. West Bay, George Square: artist's designs for central hub to be amended better reflecting budget. Local Transport Plan (LTP) pre-feasibility study to be commissioned to look at options for traffic route changes around the 'hub' area. This would be funded separately, from LTP budgets. Estimate for re-surfacing works received from DCC- pricey but realistic. Bins and benches included in re-design – more complicated than it sounds! E.g. Flood risk area which limits what can do with bins, and memorial benches need sensitive consultation. Next round of community consultation in West Bay end May, plus on-going 'Have your say' website. <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/> Interpretation Master-Plan produced for West Bay and proposal for panels outside Salt House and end of pier circulated (the latter match-funded by South West Coast Path Association).
- c. Seatown: working with Simon Williams (consultant) on improvements to the visitor welcome, including interpretation and infrastructure improvements.
- d. Kimmeridge: involved in planning of interpretation improvements

#### 2.20. Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative

- a. Funding was approved in early March with the first year's £96,000 received
- b. Work has started with volunteer parties at Baber's Farm.
- c. Currently re-shaping work plan and budget due to 13-month delay
- d. Gathered land-owners and volunteers at the Shave Cross Inn to launch the project

#### 2.21. **West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams**

- a. Working with the communities of Askerswell, Loders and Uploders to improve the condition of the River Asker.
- b. Held two meetings and undertaken a survey of the headwaters
- c. Next step is to compile information on what we already know before heading out to survey the river, once spring is fully underway.
- d. Over the summer and autumn we will support the community to deliver improvement projects, including Himalayan balsam bashing and riverfly monitoring.

#### 2.22. **Low Carbon Dorset**

- a. Programme underway, with staff, logo and a website: [www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk](http://www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk)
- b. Enquiries coming in with several EOIs received already.
- c. A biomass officer wasn't recruited, so reviewing delivery mechanism for this element. The programme has seconded Ian Rees at 0.2 FTE (1 day/week) to maximise the potential for wood-based biomass.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND**

- 2.23. We supported 10 projects during 2017/18 from dry stone wall instructor training to the Harvest Short Film Festival competition.
- 2.24. The total grant pot was £15,000 and was matched by £10,000 of cash contributions from the applicants. The ten projects generated over 100 days of volunteer activity.
- 2.25. Will have a pot of £25k for 18/19 - let your contacts know!
- 2.26. Application deadline 27th May

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY**

#### 2.27. **National Grid Visual Impact Provision**

- a. Progress continues to be made on the project to underground over 8km high voltage electricity transmission lines
- b. Planning application has been submitted with expected determination in June

2.28. **Dorset Schools:** provided input into Education group of DCC officers and hosted partnerships, looking into long term joint working and developing a more cohesive & sustainable offer to schools.

2.29. **Life Cycles and Landscapes:** work continues to produce an outstanding event as part of Inside Out Dorset 2018 at Maiden Castle. The event will be in the week leading up to the autumnal equinox (w/c 17<sup>th</sup> September)

## **ITEM 3: Finance report 2017-2018**

Item for: Information

Report by: AONB Manager

Financial implications: This is a report on past income and expenditure, so has no future funding ramifications.

Summary: The Dorset AONB team continues to be successful in demonstrating good funding leverage in terms of income generated from a modest local contribution to the core budget.

Recommendation: The Dorset AONB Board notes the funding leverage demonstrated by these accounts

### 3.1. CORE FINANCE

- a. Defra grant to core is at most 75% total costs. The Dorset AONB's local authority partners each contribute a sum as set out in the Statement of Intent to fund the Partnership, proportional to the land area of the AONB within each administration. The Dorset AONB Team seeks to draw in funds from project management and delivery to support core costs. Any Defra income in excess of that attributed to core costs is put towards projects and the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

Core income	
Defra	£ 169,507.40
Local Authorities	£ 54,511.00
Project income	£ 24,418.60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 248,437.00</b>

Core costs	Budget	Actual
Staff, ENI, Pens,	£ 212,930.00	£ 200,595.77
Travel	£ 5,700.00	£ 6,373.28
Training	£ 2,700.00	£ 1,793.52
Accommodation & Office	£ 7,000.00	£ 5,460.65
Partnership PR	£ 4,000.00	£ 6,923.39
Partnership Running Costs	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,563.25
Monitoring, research & guidance	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,300.00
Reserve movements	-£ 4,843.00	£ 22,250.51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 232,487.00</b>	<b>£ 248,260.37</b>

Reserves are maintained with agreement from local contributing partners for purposes as described in the local partners' Statement of Intent.

### 3.2. PROJECT EXPENDITURE & VALUE

		Single pot (A)	Cash income (B)	Direct spend (C= A+B)	Partner spend (D)	Volunteers (E)	TOTAL VALUE (C+D+E)	Major source of non-Defra cash income
PROJECTS	Wild Purbeck	£ 7,000	£ 8,200	£ 15,200	£ 2,409	£ -	£ 17,609	Wytch Farm Landscape Enhancement Fund
	South Dorset Ridgeway LPS	£ 6,623	£ 401,370	£ 407,993	£ 51,659	£ 46,900	£ 506,552	Heritage Lottery Fund
	Woodlink	£ 1,020	£ -	£ 1,020	£ 830	£ -	£ 1,850	Dorset County Council
	Landscape Enhancement Initiative Marshwood Vale	£ -	£ 1,500	£ 1,500		£ 400	£ 1,900	National Grid LEI
	Dorset Fingerpost project	£ 6,481	£ -	£ 6,481		£ 8,000	£ 14,481	n/a
	Dorset Food & Drink	£ 13,500	£ 54,785	£ 68,285		£ 2,400	£ 70,685	Earned income
	Stepping into Nature	£ 7,000	£ 73,356	£ 80,356	£ 83,389	£ -	£ 163,745	Big Lottery; partners
	Landscape Character refresh	£ 6,000	£ 2,000	£ 8,000		£ -	£ 8,000	n/a
	JC visitor management		£ 64,004	£ 64,004	£ 16,025	£ -	£ 80,029	Coastal Communities Fund
	West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams catchment pilot	£ -	£ 1,087	£ 1,087	£ 387	£ -	£ 1,474	Catchment Partnership
Sustainable Development Fund	£ 18,885		£ 18,885	£ 23,627	£ 7,538	£ 50,050	Project partners	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 66,509</b>	<b>£ 606,302</b>	<b>£ 672,812</b>	<b>£ 178,326</b>	<b>£ 65,238</b>	<b>£ 916,375</b>		
							estimates	

### 3.3. Summary

- a. Total delivered value is £1,164.636. This is calculated from direct spend (core, SDF & projects) plus 'added value' defined as contributions from volunteers and partners to AONB Partnership-led projects and projects supported by the Partnership's Sustainable Development Fund.
- b. Total direct spend by the AONB Partnership is £921,072
- c. Total 'added value' from partners and volunteers contributing to and to projects funded from the is £243,564

### 3.4. Pertinent ratios of leverage:

Each £1 contributed by...		
Partners	in value	in direct spend
All core funding partners	£ 4.01	£ 3.17
Defra	£ 4.94	£ 3.91
All local authority partners	£ 21.37	£ 12.34

## ITEM 4: **AONB Management Plan Review - consultation**

Item for: Decision & consultation

Report by: AONB Manager

Financial implications: Up to £10k from the AONB single pot is proposed to be made available for Management Plan review, to cover costs related to consultation and publication.  
More broadly, the AONB Management Plan will outline the vision, objectives, policies and priorities for future investment by the AONB Partnership.

Summary: Production of an AONB Management Plan is a statutory requirement through the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. The current plan expires in April 2019.

Recommendation: The Board approves the composition and role of the delegated Review Group

- 4.1. The review process and broad outline is as approved at the AONB Board meeting in May 2017. The timetable also remains unchanged:



	2017		2018												2019			
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Announce intention to review	■																	
Statement of Community Involvement	■																	
SEA: announce requirement	■																	
SEA: set context		■																
Expediency consultation			■															
Expert review groups		■	■	■														
Annual Forum				■														
Focussed community engagement					■	■	■											
Drafting MP & SEA							■	■										
Draft to review group								■										
Draft to PB									■									
Amendments as necessary									■	■								
Review group sign-off										■								
Formal consultation										■	■	■						
Consultation review process												■						
Final draft to review group													■					
Final draft to PB														■				
Final publication															■			
Adoption by LAs															■	■	■	
Submit to SoS																	■	■
Promote																		■

SEA = strategic environmental assessment

LCA = landscape character assessment

#### 4.2. REVIEW GROUP

- a. A review group has been recruited to oversee and advise on the review and re-drafting process. It comprises, in addition to the AONB Steering Group
  - Adrian Ragbourne (Lyme Forward; lots of experience in community action)
  - Hannah Jefferson (National Trust West Dorset; lots of experience in visitor management)
  - Kate Wood (Activate Performing Arts; arts delivery and advocacy)
  - Luke Rake (Kingston Maurward College / Local Enterprise Partnership; education and rural estate management)
  - Michael Dower (Southern Dorset LAG; protected landscape management)
  - Will Bond (Alaska Ecological Contracting / Local Nature Partnership; land management, rural businesses)
- b. There are 3 main tasks for the review group:
  - To advise on and agree a structure for the AONB Management Plan (by late May)
  - To help shape and agree a draft Management Plan for public consultation (in July)
  - To help shape and approve the final draft after consultation, before it goes to the AONB Partnership Board for approval and local authority adoption (in October)

#### 4.3. ANNUAL FORUM CONSULTATION

- a. Annual forum meetings were held in Bridport, Blandford and Wareham targeting an audience of community actors and representatives. We were seeking feedback on key issues affecting the area.
- b. A summary of feedback will be presented to the Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> May.

#### 4.4. 'EXPERT REVIEW' CONSULTATION

- a. Various groups have been consulted, both those convened for this purpose and those with a broader interest in the plan and its outcomes. These include the Dorset Rural Enterprise Group, the

Dorset Coast Forum Steering Group and groups convened around each of the current plan's policy chapter headings (Landscape, Geodiversity, etc.)

4.5. PARTNERSHIP BOARD CONSULTATION

- a. We would like to give Board members the opportunity for early input to the review process on the 17<sup>th</sup> May. Key questions we seek your input on are
- What has changed in the last 5 years that we need to respond to – political, economic, social, technological, legal?
  - In using AONB policy, has anyone found any policy weak or deficient?
  - Are the policies fit for purpose?
  - What priority areas of action should the AONB Partnership take to oversee, deliver or enact those policies?

**ITEM 5: South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership (presentation)**

Item for: Information

Report by: SDR Team

Summary: The SDR Landscape Partnership Programme will conclude and complete in September 2018, after 5½ years of delivery. This Board meeting is the final one for the SDR Team to describe the substantial outputs that have been achieved. The final outputs will be fully reported to the Partnership Board in November.

Financial implications: The AONB Partnership has contributed £36,572 in project funds and substantial time and effort in hosting this flagship project. Partners have contributed over £685,000, HLF has contributed over £1,444,000 and volunteers have contributed £242,500

**ITEM 6: National policy direction: 25 Year Environment Plan & 'Health & Harmony' (Agricultural command paper)**

Item for: Information

Report by: Tom Munro & Ian Alexander (Natural England)

Summary: These two documents reveal much of the Government's post-Brexit ambition and policy direction in terms of the environment, land use and agriculture/forestry. What follows is a summary of the documents which are available in full at the following we addresses 25 year environment plan: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>  
Health & Harmony: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment>

Financial implications: Directly for the AONB Partnership, there may be core funding implications arising from a proposed review of protected landscapes in the 25 Year Environment Plan. For wider conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, the future of support for land management (formerly via the Common Agricultural Policy) will have significant implications across the AONB.

## **‘A GREEN FUTURE’, OUR 25 YEAR PLAN TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT**

- 6.1. Overview. The plan was launched in January setting out the Government’s goals for improving the environment, within a generation, and leaving it in a better state than we found it. It has forewords from the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, Michael Gove. The Plan forms the culmination of over 2 years of close work and consultation with environmental bodies, including the NAAONB. It describes 25 year goals, policies and actions, and is explicit in its support for the work of protected landscapes. Policies are summarised below
- 6.2. Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably
  - a. 1. Embedding an ‘environmental net gain’ principle for development, including housing and infrastructure
  - b. 2. Improving how we manage and incentivise land management
    - i. Designing and delivering a new environmental land management system
    - ii. Introducing new farming rules for water
    - iii. Working with farmers to use fertilisers efficiently
    - iv. Protecting crops while reducing the environmental impact of pesticides
  - c. 3. Improving soil health and restoring and protecting our peatlands
    - i. Developing better information on soil health
    - ii. Restoring vulnerable peatlands and ending peat use in horticultural products by 2030.
  - d. 4. Focusing on woodland to maximise its many benefits
    - i. Supporting the development of a new Northern Forest
    - ii. Supporting larger scale woodland creation
    - iii. Appointing a national Tree Champion
  - e. 5. Reducing risks from flooding and coastal erosion
    - i. Expanding the use of natural flood management solutions
    - ii. Putting in place more sustainable drainage systems
    - iii. Making ‘at-risk’ properties more resilient to flooding
- 6.3. Chapter 2: Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
  - a. 1. Protecting and recovering nature
    - i. Publishing a strategy for nature
    - ii. Developing a Nature Recovery Network
    - iii. Providing opportunities for the reintroduction of native species
    - iv. Exploring how to give individuals the chance to deliver lasting conservation
    - v. Improving biosecurity to protect and conserve nature
  - b. 2. Conserving and enhancing natural beauty
    - i. Reviewing National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - c. 3. Respecting nature in how we use water
    - i. Reforming our approach to water abstraction
    - ii. Increasing water supply and incentivising greater water efficiency and less personal use
- 6.4. Chapter 3: Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
  - a. 1. Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces
    - i. Considering how environmental therapies could be delivered through mental health services
    - ii. Promoting health and wellbeing through the natural environment

- b. 2. Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school
  - i. Helping primary schools create nature-friendly grounds
  - ii. Supporting more pupil contact with local natural spaces
- c. 3. Greening our towns and cities
  - i. Creating more green infrastructure
  - ii. Planting more trees in and around our towns and cities
- d. 4. Making 2019 a Year of Action for the environment
  - i. Helping children and young people from all backgrounds to engage with nature and improve the environment.
  - ii. Supporting the 2019 Year of Green Action

6.5. Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste

- a. 1. Maximising resource efficiency and minimising environmental impacts at end of life.
  - i. Achieving zero avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042
  - ii. Reducing food supply chain emissions and waste
  - iii. Reducing litter and littering
  - iv. Improving management of residual waste
  - v. Cracking down on fly-tippers and waste criminals
  - vi. Reducing the impact of wastewater
- b. 2. Reducing pollution
  - i. Publishing a Clean Air Strategy
  - ii. Curbing emissions from combustion plants and generators
  - iii. Publishing a Chemicals Strategy
  - iv. Minimising the risk of chemical contamination in our water
  - v. Ensuring we continue to maintain clean recreational waters and warning about temporary pollution

6.6. Chapter 5: Securing clean, healthy, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans

- a. 1. Introducing a sustainable fisheries policy as we leave the Common Fisheries Policy
  - i. Achieving good environmental status in our seas while allowing marine industries to thrive

6.7. Chapter 6: Protecting and improving our global environment

- a. 1. Providing international leadership and leading by example
  - i. Tackling climate change
  - ii. Protecting and improving international biodiversity
- b. 2. Helping developing nations protect and improve the environment
  - i. Providing assistance and supporting disaster planning
  - ii. Supporting and protecting international forests and sustainable global agriculture
- c. 3. Leaving a lighter footprint on the global environment
  - i. Enhancing sustainability
  - ii. Protecting and managing risks from hazards
  - iii. Supporting zero-deforestation supply chains

6.8. Implications for Dorset AONB

- a. AONBs are effective deliverers across a wide range of the policies: there is much that we are already working on and supporting which is helping to deliver this 25 year vision; this will be reported to Defra via the National Association for AONBs
- b. A review of protected landscapes (“Hobhouse Review for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”) will consider coverage of designations, how designated areas deliver their responsibilities, how designated areas are financed, and whether there is scope for expansion. It will also consider opportunities to enhance the environment in existing designations, and expand on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks to connect more people with the natural environment.

## **'HEALTH & HARMONY'**

- 6.1. Overview. Defra has just closed a consultation on policy ideas set out in a paper on a new, post-Common Agricultural Policy domestic settlement for agriculture. This consultation is the first step towards a new agricultural policy outside of the EU with the intention of securing a “bright future for farming and the environment.” It deals with agricultural support in both direct payments and agri-environment schemes and has implications for the future of wider rural development funds (equivalent to LEADER and the Countryside Productivity Scheme)
- 6.2. Leaving the Common Agricultural Policy
  - a. The CAP has shaped approaches to farming for the last 40 years and some of the world’s first agri-environment schemes, which contributed to a range of improvements for the British countryside. Significant reforms shifted the CAP away from the ‘butter mountains’ and ‘wine lakes’ of the 1980s and the decoupling of Direct Payments from production has reduced some of the incentives to produce in an environmentally-harmful way.
  - b. Despite this, the Government believes the CAP remains flawed e.g. land-based subsidies undermine incentives for widespread productivity improvement and are bad value for taxpayers and efforts to enhance our environment have failed to reward some public goods adequately, such as measures to improve water quality and soil health.
- 6.3. The Government’s ambition for farming and the environment
  - a. The Government is aiming for “a more dynamic, more self-reliant agriculture industry” and also “a reformed agricultural and land management policy to deliver a better and richer environment in England.” They believe this can be achieved by incentivising methods of farming that create new habitats for wildlife, increase biodiversity, reduce flood risk, better mitigate climate change, and improve air quality by reducing agricultural emissions.
  - b. The Government is expecting to achieve this by ensuring that public money is spent on public goods, such as restoring peat bog and measures which sequester carbon from the atmosphere; protecting iconic aspects of the rural heritage; and reducing disease by better monitoring animal health and welfare.
- 6.4. An ‘agricultural transition’
  - a. The Government states it will maintain the same cash total funding for the sector until the end of this parliament: this includes all EU and Exchequer funding provided for farm support of the current CAP. Once the UK has moved away from the CAP, there will be an ‘agricultural transition’ period in England in the belief that this will give farmers time to prepare for new trading relationships and an environmental land management system.
- 6.5. The proposals for England
  - a. In England, Direct Payments will continue during the ‘agricultural transition’ but in order to support farmers to prepare for change, the Government says it will need to free up funds. This will be done by: applying reductions to Direct Payments, starting with those receiving the highest payments; and funding “pilots of environmental land management schemes and to help farmers unlock their full potential for sustainable production”.
  - b. The Government believes there is a huge opportunity for UK agriculture to improve its competitiveness by developing the next generation of food and farming technology, adopting the latest agronomic techniques, reducing the impact of pests and diseases, investing in skills and equipment, and collaborating with other farmers and processors.
  - c. It wants future agricultural policy to create the conditions to ensure farmers improve their productivity and add value to their products, so they can become more profitable and competitive. To do this, the Government proposes to reduce and phase out Direct Payments in England completely by the end of the ‘agricultural transition’ period.

- d. Some sectors may find it more difficult than others to adapt – for example, those located in the most remote, wild, and beautiful parts of England and the Government appears to recognise this and the environmental and cultural value of rural landscapes and traditional ways of life. It says it will explore possible options on how to best support such areas.
- e. The Government is looking at how to simplify existing schemes – such as Countryside Stewardship schemes and cross compliance - during the ‘agricultural transition’ period and also the removal or reduction of “current ineffective greening requirements”, before it moves to a new regulatory regime.

#### 6.6. A new environmental land management system

- a. The main proposal is a new agricultural policy to be underpinned by payment of public money for the provision of public goods to include environmental enhancement and protection, better animal and plant health, animal welfare, improved public access, rural resilience, and productivity.
- b. The Government believes this new environmental land management system will help it deliver its manifesto commitment to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it inherited it and that farming is crucial to achieving the goals set out in the recently published 25 Year Environment Plan.
- c. The new environmental land management system will pay farmers and land managers for environmentally beneficial outcomes and ensure an effective application of the ‘polluter pays’ principle.
- d. It will be underpinned by natural capital principles (i.e. the benefits the natural environment provides for people and wildlife are properly valued) and these will be used to inform decisions on future land management.
- e. The Government is proposing it will consult with others on the design of new and ambitious schemes and pilot them in preparation for the introduction of the system.

#### 6.7. Animal welfare

- 6.8. Rather than significantly increasing legislation, pilot schemes that offer targeted payments to farmers who ensure higher welfare are proposed.

#### 6.9. Plant and animal health

- a. There is a recognition that preventing and tackling pests and disease in trees, plants and animals has wider benefits for productivity, the environment, tackling climate change and public health and the Government wants to see a substantial reduction in regular disease outbreaks within localized areas.

#### 6.10. Smarter regulation and enforcement

- a. The Government believes that parts of the current enforcement system impose disproportionate penalties or provide insufficient scope for farmers to remedy underperformance and so propose a new enforcement system whilst also maintaining a robust approach. A review of the inspections regime will be undertaken.
- b. Also proposed is support for industry initiatives to improve animal and plant health, including through better information-sharing and funding innovative approaches to improving farm animal welfare.

#### 6.11. Managing risk and volatility

- a. The Government states that the best way of improving resilience in the farming sector is to support increases in farm productivity, promote better animal and plant health, and make sure farmers have access to the tools they need to effectively manage their risk. It will consult on the wider development of insurance, futures contracts and other risk management tools, and how government can encourage their adoption. It will also consider how to improve the government response to major crises.

- 6.12. Helping rural communities prosper
- a. The Government acknowledges that agriculture exists within broader rural communities and economies and that businesses in rural areas (including farms) face particular challenges, which include reduced physical and digital connectivity. It proposes to work on improving rural broadband and 4G and on the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support rural businesses.
- 6.13. International trade
- a. There is a proposal to build on the GREAT Britain campaign and develop a British brand to highlight the origin and the environmental credentials to consumers. The Government states it is fully committed to maintaining high standards of consumer, worker, and environmental protection in trade agreements.
- 6.14. A skilled workforce
- a. The Government says it will stimulate a forward-thinking agricultural industry that invests in the future through innovative practice and automation and that it wants to attract more graduates and domestic workforce into agriculture, food processing, and forestry.
- 6.15. A new statutory framework
- a. The Government states the farming industry needs a new statutory framework to allow it to deliver many of the reforms set out in the consultation paper and it will introduce an Agriculture Bill that sets out a long-term domestic policy.

## ITEM 7: Local Government Review

Item for: Information

Report by: Hilary Jordan, Dorset Councils Partnership

Financial implications: There are no immediate financial implications for the Partnership. As the 5 contributing Local Authorities become one Unitary Authority it is anticipated that the total contribution to the AONB Partnership will continue. However the new Dorset Council will be seeking to make further financial savings across its entire budget in the future.

## ITEM 8: Board member ambassadorship & AONB opportunities

AONB Board Members are encouraged to take an ambassadorial role for the AONB's landscape designation and its managing Partnership, primarily within the organisation or sector which they represent but wider afield. The team offers an introduction to the role and the landscape to new board members in order to help them fulfil this.

The AONB Chairman requests Partnership Board members to feed back to the Board briefly (2 mins max):

- a. **How you have raised AONB issues / news to your organisation**
- b. **How you have helped promote awareness of the AONB in your organisation / wider afield**
- c. **Any new opportunities for engaging in the delivery of the AONB Management Plan**