



Dorset AONB Partnership  
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October 2018

Dear Board Member

## **Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 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 Kate Townsend on [kate.townsend@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:kate.townsend@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

## **AGENDA**

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

- 1 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**
- 2 90 second Partner updates**
- 3 Delivering the AONB Management Plan (information)**
- 4 Draft AONB Management Plan 2019-2014 (decision)**
- 5 Review of Protected Landscapes (decision & consultation), including**
  - Introduction to the Review and call for evidence
  - Dorset & East Devon National Park Campaign
- 6 Dorset AONB Business Plan 2019-2020 (decision)**
- 7 Stepping into Nature presentation (information)**
- 8 Any other business**

### **Proposed dates of next meetings:**

Partnership Board 2018: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019  
Steering Group 2018: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019



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# ITEM 1: DRAFT MINUTES of the last Partnership Board meeting (17th May 2017, Dorchester Cricket Pavilion)

## Present:

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

## Local Authority Members:

Cllr Peter Webb (Purbeck District Council), Cllr Hilary Cox (Dorset County Council), Cllr Deidre Skipwith (North Dorset District Council)

## Sector representatives:

Robert Lasseter (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Rupert Best (Country land and Business Association - CLA), Hannah Jefferson (National Trust), Alison Moore (Local Enterprise Partnership - LEP)

## Defra family officers:

Ian Alexander (Natural England)

## Local Authority officers:

Alison Turnock (Purbeck District Council - PDC), Hilary Jordan (West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland and North Dorset District Council)

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

## Apologies:

Louise Stratton (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Brian Blease (Purbeck Heritage Network), Cllr Audrey Burch (North Dorset District Council), Will Langer (CLA), Sam Rose (Jurassic Coast Trust), Mat Low (Natural England), Ken Buchan (Dorset County Council), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Kiera Diment (Dorset Food & Drink), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer),

## Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all with particular welcome to new Board member Hannah Jefferson (National Trust).

## 1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

**Subject to one correction (changing 'Economic' to 'Enterprise'), the minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct**

## 2. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery.

Discussion points:

- a. Dorset Fingerpost Project: RB asked who owns the asset: they currently remain property of Dorset County Council. However there is potential to develop a better-resourced project which could look at asset transfer to the community. RB raised the question of spelling mistakes on fingerposts: TM replied that some are preserved (in restorations) as a locally distinctive quirk; some are recent mistakes which may warrant rectifying. TM encouraged the board to alert the team to any spelling inconsistencies. DS stated that the restoration projects were expensive, and community groups may be more willing to contribute to restoration if they were subsequently able to insure them.
- b. Low Carbon Dorset programme: RB asked if there was opportunity for hydro-power generation. IR explained that it's not got widespread potential in Dorset due to relatively low flows and shallow gradients. IA added that using existing structures (e.g. mills or weirs) also could conflict with conservation objectives for that watercourse. DS cited an Archimedes screw project which was now partially redundant because of reduced flows.

**RESOLUTION: The Board approved and noted progress on Management Plan delivery.** JW added his congratulations to the team; RL added that it was astonishing

### 3. 2017-2018 Finance report

TM presented the paper.

Discussion points:

- a. PW asked about valuation of volunteer time. TM replied that the team use widely-recognised standard figures of £50 per day unskilled, £150 per day skilled and £350 per day professional.
- b. DS sought clarification about the unpaid nature of volunteers: TM confirmed that they are not paid. Some may claim travel expenses if travelling is part of their volunteer task.
- c. RL asked if the AONB team quantify the benefits that volunteers receive (e.g. health and wellbeing; social). TM replied that this is an area of interest: we record some feedback but are not currently collecting health and wellbeing data. JW added a personal view point, that the benefits to wellbeing are significant. HJe: volunteer surveys by the National Trust give a sense of how important it is to people, but it is difficult to quantify.

**RESOLUTION: The Board congratulated the team on the funding leverage demonstrated in the accounts**

### 4. Management Plan Review

TM presented the paper.

Discussion points:

- a. Board involvement in pre-consultation draft: the team will ensure Board Members have a chance to comment on the pre-consultation draft.
- b. RB asked if the Review Group contained sufficient agricultural experience/knowledge. TM replied that it was at least partially covered by two representatives on that group and that agriculture specialists had fed into the 'expert review' stage. However, TM would be alert to this potential issue and could recruit another volunteer accordingly.

The board contributed to the process in a workshop session.

**RESOLUTION: The Board delegates the preparation of a pre-consultation draft to the review overview group**

### 5. South Dorset Ridgeway Partnership (presentation)

JS led the presentation with support from JHe and MMcL, and showed the short film published by the Arts Development Company which can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/TazhDziPrQ8>

Discussion points:

- a. Question from **RL**: have countryside stewardship schemes prepared as a result of the partnership been agreed by Natural England? Answer by **JS** and **JHe**: some applications have gone live, but others haven't due to RPA backlog. There was a discussion about the backlog and implications on the environment, mental health of Natural England staff, leading to high turnover and on the financial situation of local farmers. **RL** expressed sympathy for Natural England staff. **IA** responded: they are complicated schemes, but they are complicatedly administered. **JHe** added that funding from the South Dorset Ridgeway LPS has allowed schemes to be submitted where they otherwise wouldn't have been.
- b. **RL** mentioned that the drystone wall at Gould's hill is fantastic, and we should go and see it.
- c. **HJ** highlighted the importance of continuity amongst partners. **JW** mentioned the benefits to the individuals themselves, but delivery only succeeds with a high-quality coordinator.
- d. Comment from **JW**: amazing amount achieved, with most targets exceeded. It was inspirational stuff and has laid foundations for the future. He was really encouraged by the numbers of young people engaged.
- e. Question from **RL**: It is part of national trail, but is it in the national trail booklet, published by Artem? If not: how do we get in? Now that project is coming to end, how do update the contents, to include links to the film?

**Action: James Sharpe to look into updating national trail publication**

### 6. National policy direction: 25 Year Environment Plan & Health & Harmony (Agriculture Command paper)

TM presented on the 25 Year Environment Plan, picking out key areas of currently delivery by the AONB team and areas of opportunity for future activity.

Discussion point:

- a. HJE asked if there was a risk that a top-down review of protected landscapes may not allow the current degree of local adaptation to delivery as seen among the various AONB partnerships. TM replied that – while we don't yet know the extent of this review – Defra officials appreciate this factor.

IA presented a personal perspective with reference to the policy direction outlined in the Agriculture Command paper. Key points:

- The Knepp Estate's rewilding project and how it exemplifies a land-based business 'getting off a treadmill' of high inputs, illustrating how to make an alternative living outside of the subsidy environment.
- The future of farming post-Brexit: the Basic Payment Scheme will be withdrawn. For small farmers, this is quite often the difference between profit and loss. Combined with increased age of farmers, and less interest from children to take on liability, change is on the horizon.
- 'Clean meat' and 'clean milk' are technological developments backed by some agriculture-based business (Cargills), happening in EU & US. Stem cells are used to grow the products in lab environments, eliminating big inefficiencies in energy conversion. If the price of these products come down and they become more mainstream, the niche for farmers to provide commodity meat and milk will reduce. As c40% arable crops are grown for feeding intensively-reared animals this could have big implications for the farmed environment. If farming, as we know it, is no longer required to provide bulk commodities there are opportunities for higher quality, more sustainable farming practices – in particular those which conserve high-quality habitats and landscapes.

Discussion points (largely on clean meat/milk):

- b. Feedstock for the lab processes would still be agriculturally-derived, but much less (in volume) required
- c. Consumer demand may not be sufficient for this technology to take off
- d. Risk of exporting environmental degradation in the same manner as that associated with many manufactured goods.
- e. Impact on land prices (devaluation likely): BPS has likely caused some inflation of land prices but this is probably a small portion of the value increases seen over the last two decades: land prices bear little relation to its annual productivity
- f. Government policy likely to continue to be a major driver in dictating agricultural practices, but the emphasis is broadly shifting from policy encouraging production to policies promoting conservation and resource protection. There was a consensus that this shift should be welcomed.

## 7. Local Government Review

Hilary Jordan gave a verbal update.

Secretary of State for Local Government has approved the merger of Dorset's local authorities into 2 Unitary Authorities. All of Dorset AONB's Dorset area will fall into the new Dorset Council area (the AONB includes very small areas of Devon & Somerset).

The Structural Change Order is being put before parliament, with a decision expected in June. Consequent orders will follow. A Joint Committee has been established for the Dorset Council area, which will become the Shadow Authority once the structural change order has been passed. This includes all elected members from the County, District and Borough Councils which will form the Unitary. As this is a very large body (c175 elected members), full Joint Council meetings will be rare and many decisions will be taken by a shadow executive made up of c20 elected members. This is likely to be formed in June.

Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 (vesting date) some senior staff appointments will be made moving towards a Chief Executive in autumn. Depending on the start date of this appointment, they may be able to make Director-level appointments to start on vesting day. Key tasks will be to form a legal and balanced budget.

All other staff (including the AONB team) will be TUPE'd across to the new authority in April. Full service re-organisation will start when the Director-level appointments have been made.

## 8. Partners updates

**Purbeck Local Plan:** PW updated the Board. PDC are currently redrawing the plan, and will undertake a brief process consultation before submission to inspector in March next year. There was concern from the AONB over their small sites policy, but PW is hopeful that this has been addressed.





		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											

### 3.2. AONB team

- a. Kate Townsend joined the team in June as the Dorset AONB Support Assistant, to replace Theresa McManus. This is a core role to support all aspects of the team's work. Kate's normal working pattern is Monday, Tuesday and a half day on Wednesday.
- b. James Sharpe and Marie McLeish came to the end of their fixed term contracts at the end of September 2018, as the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership drew to a close.

### CORE WORK

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

- a. The AONB Team have engaged in a number of recent appeals, including for beach huts at The Pines Hotel in Swanage, a development of 33 dwellings at Watton Park in Bridport, a single dwelling in Beaminster and a telecoms mast in Milton Abbas. The first two appeals were by means of public hearing, whereas the others were by written representation. The first three appeals were dismissed and the telecoms mast was allowed.
- b. The Team has responded to the consultation on the preferred options for the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Joint Plan. The Team has also responded to the issues and options consultation for North Dorset. Furthermore, the Team is preparing to respond to the consultation on the pre-submission draft of the Purbeck Local Plan.
- c. The Team participated in the examination of the Dorset Minerals Site Plan, specifically to discuss the implication of the proposed extension to Swanworth Quarry in Purbeck. The proposal was opposed by the team on the grounds that it would fail to satisfy the requirement of the NPPF major development test.

### 3.4. 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. This bid (for nearly £200,000) is currently being considered by OFGEM, having passed the previous 2 approval stages.
- c. **INTERREG VA (Channel):** Sally King attended a workshop in Paris to select partners and develop a bid to this programme. Disappointingly, the partner selection made by the Secretariat did not include Dorset AONB. However, the team is in discussion with National Trust, Activate Performing Arts and the Dorset Arts Development Company to develop a transnational programme seeking to develop the tourism offer around natural and cultural heritage with visitor infrastructure and temporary interpretative events.
- 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 planning a relatively small-scale bid (<£50,000) to support the fingerpost project

### 3.5. National Association for AONBs / Protected Landscapes collaboration

- a. The NAAONB is prioritising the Designated Landscapes Review; lead officers have helped shape an advocacy framework and a 'family response' to the review.
- b. Alongside this, NAAONB has also worked to secure a proposed amendment to the Agriculture Bill, tabled by Cheryl Gillan MP. The amendment states, "In 1 (1)(c) add '*landscape quality*' after '*enhances*' and before '*cultural heritage*' so it reads '*managing land or water in a way that maintains, restores or enhances landscape quality, cultural heritage or natural heritage*'."
- c. AONB Countryside Officer Ian Rees and AONB Culture, Community & Learning Officer Sue Dampney have enrolled with a Heritage Lottery sponsored programme being delivered by NAAONB, Future Landscapes. This is about AONB family staff development and building resilience in the organisation.
- d. Dorset AONB made a moderate contribution to a new publication "Ash" by Archie Miles, commissioned and developed as part of The Ash Project, led by Kent Downs AONB. This beautifully-produced book celebrates and records the importance of the ash tree in the country's landscapes. It is available for sale at £30 via the Woodland Trust <https://shop.woodlandtrust.org.uk/ash-book>
- e. **Lifecycles & Landscapes** has concluded. This collaborative arts project was led by Activate Performing Arts and involved the Dorset, North Wessex Downs, Chilterns and Norfolk Coast AONBs. A final installation/performance event was held on Maiden Castle in the week leading to 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Although audience numbers were weather-affected, the resolution performance was a piece of site-specific work that was at once evocative, inspiring, spiritual, funny, irreverent, beautiful and awesome.

### 3.6. 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
  - 7,745 Twitter followers @DorsetAONB; 539 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/Dorset-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty-AONB-449270285224339/>

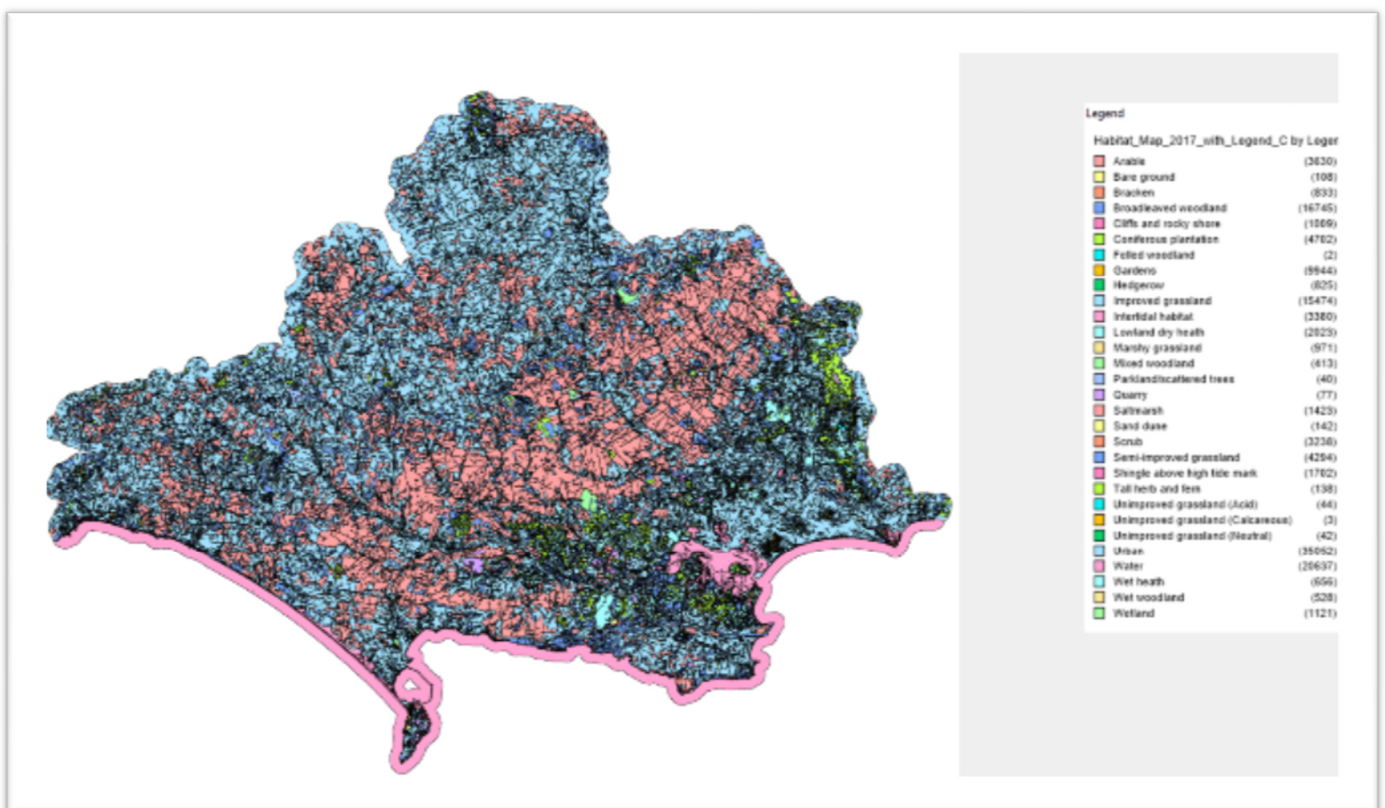


- 21,525 Twitter followers @DorsetFoodDrink; 2,229 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/dorsetfoodanddrink/>
  - 2,041 Twitter followers @LandBoneStone; 840 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/landbonestone/>
  - 440 Twitter followers @StepIn2Nature; 181 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/stepin2nature/>
- d. Stepin2nature.org is the project's new URL which directs to a strong presence on the AONB website.

### 3.7. Monitoring AONB condition:

A GIS monitoring project looking at changes in the built environment over the period 2007-17 is reaching its conclusion, with a final review of the outputs being progressed. This project feeds into the review of the AONBs Landscape Character Assessment and is also linked with the photographic monitoring work that has been significantly progressed in recent years. Overall, the AONB will soon benefit from a significant amount of monitoring data that enables analysis of past change and feeds into our planning work.

Draft habitats map:



## DORSET AONB PROJECTS

3.8. **South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership Scheme (SDRLPS)** has come to an end. At the time of writing the final report, claim and project evaluation are near completion. A full report will be made available in due course. The scheme has delivered significant outputs, summarised below, over a 5 ½ year period, with substantial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). While delivery against ambitious aims has not been without difficulty, overall the scheme has delivered substantial change. While the final financial details must be approved by HLF, provisional figures show direct spend of £2.47M, partner donations in kind of over £180k and a total volunteer time value of over £300k.

3.9. **SDRLPS Programme A:** Conserving and restoring natural and built heritage

- a. Landowner advice delivered through FWAGSW & Dorset Wildlife Trust including 88 advisory visits, 18 whole farm plans, 35 surveys of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, 175ha priority habitat

restored with 220ha priority habitat enhanced and interventions at Black Down that enable its appropriate grazing.

- b. Winterbourne works including 500m river restoration 10 site visits and 4 community events with a total attendance of 85
- c. 'Carbon Club' discussion group for farmers with 15 events and 3 case studies produced
- d. 43 monuments in improved condition, >2km hedges restored (with 495 volunteer days), 540m stone walls restored (with 1190 volunteer days), 100km roadside verges surveyed and 6km restored, 40 traditional fingerposts, street signs and milestones restored.

### 3.10. **SDRLPS Programme B: Participation**

- a. 34 heritage-based community events attracting 511 participants, 19 wildlife champions and 162 people trained in environmental monitoring, 2723 new environmental records, 440 round barrow condition surveys and 106 heritage sites identified by aerial survey ground-truthed
- b. 929 participants in creative workshops, 5316 attendees at 6 high-quality festivals
- c. 37 young people trained in interview techniques producing 54 interviews
- d. 7 geo-located smartphone apps delivering soundscapes appropriate to place

### 3.11. **SDRLPS Programme C: Access & Learning**

- a. Developments at Black Down, including a new car park, paths, interpretation and orientation point and solar-aligned stone circle sculpture.
- b. 10 circular walks developed which will have relevant phototrail guides to improve accessibility, new artist-developed maps to promote walking routes, 76 guided walks with a total audience of 1330 people.
- c. 1 successful PhD in community archaeology supported; the postgraduate student helped deliver numerous other outputs during the course of the PhD study.
- d. Artist residencies with community involvement including 10 events and a touring exhibition which attracted a total audience of 650
- e. Redevelopment of the Archaeology Gallery at Dorset County Museum and a linked learning programme
- f. 5 schools festivals engaging c1000 students in outdoor, creative activities stimulating their understanding of the Ridgeway area and its heritage
- g. 35 teaching staff trained to Forest School standards
- h. 51 schools engaged in teacher training and delivering lessons using the Ridgeway and its heritage to fulfil curriculum needs, 82 lesson plans developed and much teacher support delivered.
- i. A programme of workshops and events around traditional West Gallery music, traditional song, reading literature and creative writing attracting a total participation of 152; some groups are now self-sustaining.

### 3.12. **SDRLPS Programme D: Training**

- a. Three 20-day courses on the heritage of the Ridgeway at Kingston Maurward College to 39 people
- b. A training needs analysis of 30 people engaged in land management in the area
- c. 40 volunteer rangers committing a staggering 1725 days of volunteer time
- d. 8 apprentice rangers trained alongside Dorset Countryside rangers

### 3.13. **Dorset Food & Drink**

- a. The transition DF&D Community Interest Company has a board of directors totalling 8 and has a new chair serving on a self-imposed probation period (Giles Henschel owner and CEO of Olives et al). The CIC has applied for a bank account to increase their independence.
- b. Board members are now taking an active role in the development and future of DF&D
- c. Business members total 180; we continue to support all with industry information, event invitations, events and support and advice and promote them through various channels.
- d. The DF&D trip to the House of Parliament to showcase the food and drink of North Dorset with Simon Hoare MP, took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> September.

- 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, SWLEP Great South West, and the Growth Hub.
- f. Please visit and support the DF&D Christmas Fair – on the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November, at Athelhampton House from 10am – 4pm. As before, free park and ride buses are available from County Hall. Running to a published timetable.

### 3.14. **Stepping into Nature**

This programme supported by Big Lottery's Reaching Communities programme has reached its halfway point; it ends March 2020 and has an annual budget of c£100k with significant in-kind support from participating organisations. Steph Aburrow now works full time on the project since October.

Outputs include:

- a. 51 activities so far this year with attendance of 261 in total
- b. Received 139 registration forms (individual people) and 157 feedback forms, contributing to an independent assessment of the health impact with Public Health Dorset along with participant interviews
- c. 40 people since April (132 in total) have received dementia awareness training, with more sessions planned.
- d. 4 Open Dementia Awareness sessions planned to March 2019
- e. £6,376 of the Community pot has been awarded to: (bringing around £14k in-kind)
  - Dorchester Youth Extra (DYE) - Open Air Cinema event
  - Allington Hill, Cooper's Wood and Field Community Group - Community Activity Events
  - Sing & Stroll - Sing & Stroll Sessions Bridport
  - Chancery Trips - Chancery Trips
- f. Wide promotion:
  - The project has been promoted to over 5,000 people through events, talks & presentations. These include 'Picnic in the Park' run jointly with Dorchester Town Council, LiveWell, Natural Choices & North Dorset CCG with around 250 attending.
  - Publicity through various streams such as Wessex FM, social media and local groups and magazines
  - New webpages set up and running [www.stepin2ature.org](http://www.stepin2ature.org)
  - Monthly E-news is with 109 subscribers
  - Twitter follows 440 / Facebook followers 174
  - Publications: New A5 leaflet planned plus Landscape interaction book for launch Yr3

### 3.15. **Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Fossil Forest**

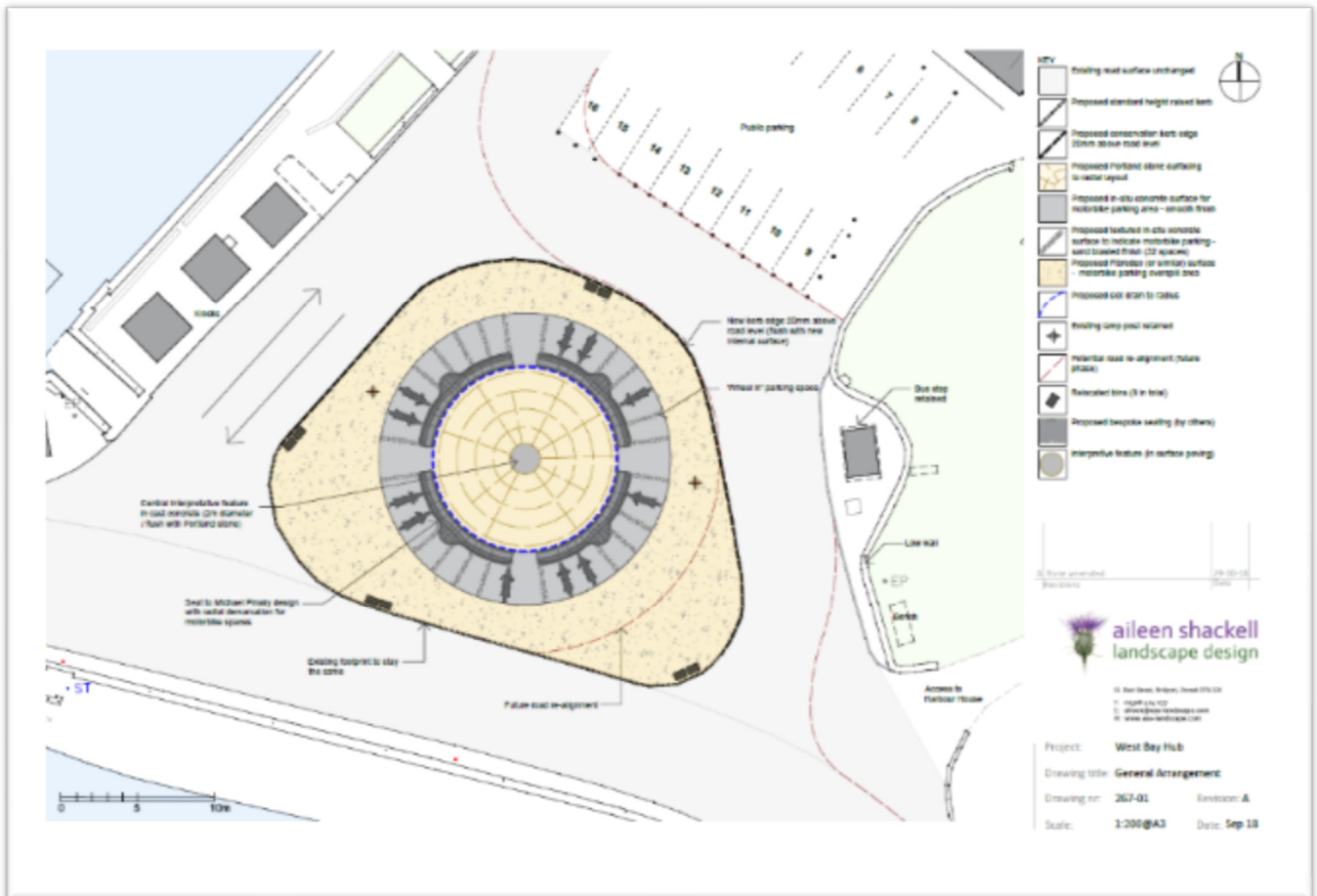
- a. Easter 2019: Unexploded ordnance survey (MOD bomb sweep). Vertical Technologies to install catch fence and netting
- b. July/ Aug 2019: DCC to undertake works to replace railings and steps, improve entrance and landscape new seating area approx. halfway down the steps
- c. August 2019: interpretation installed
- d. Sept 2019: site opened
- e. More here: [www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/fossil-forest-welcome-hub1](http://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/fossil-forest-welcome-hub1)

### 3.16. **Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: West Bay Central Hub**

- a. Works to take place Jan – March 2019, aim to be completed by Easter.
- b. Dorset County Council engineers and independent architect (Aileen Shackell) working to convert artist's (Michael Pinsky) designs into costed, feasible plan for the 'motorcycle parking' area between the George pub and West Bay harbour. Awaiting final costings for removal and re-surfacing. We have pushed for a reduction in the original quote which took up a considerable proportion of the overall budget, hopefully allowing more budget for the seating structure and (new) planned

orientation circle in the middle (set flat in the paving). Sawn (smooth) concrete paving and cast concrete seat will reflect existing materials used in West Bay at end of pier and The Mound.

- c. Design will allow for future implementation of traffic route change options identified in LTP study but funding not available to implement within the life time of this project.
- d. Brief for panel designs (2 at end of pier, one outside Salt House) has been sent out to 5 designers with deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> November. Sam Scriven from Jurassic Coast Trust and Sally creating content. More here: <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/west-bay-welcome-hub>



### 3.17. Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Seatown & Kimmeridge

- a. Seatown: Sally King helped with improvements to the visitor welcome, including interpretation and infrastructure improvements. Project completed.
- b. Kimmeridge: SK involved in planning of improved visitor experience including better linkage between attractions, and interpretation improvements

### 3.18. Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative

- a. Winter work parties underway
- b. Achievements to date:
  - 2ha of grassland restoration underway
  - Scrub clearance at two farms
  - 100m of hedge laid
  - 21 hedgerow trees planted
  - One pond restored
- c. A full winter's worth of activity planned with weekly volunteer work parties being led by Dorset Wildlife Trust.

- 3.19. **West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams**
- a. Report on the State of the Asker being prepared that will guide action within the catchment
  - b. Preliminary activities undertaken:
    - 8 people trained in riverfly monitoring
    - Himalayan balsam pulling
  - c. A day spent with Lodgers School looking at the river environment
  - d. In conversation with the Environment Agency about delivering Natural Flood Management solutions within the catchment over the winter.
- 3.20. **Low Carbon Dorset**
- a. Programme underway, supported by Ian Rees: [www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk](http://www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk)
  - b. Biomass projects being supported including some farm-scale district heating schemes in the AONB.
- 3.21. **Wild Purbeck Partnership**
- a. The Wild Purbeck partnership continues to meet three times a year, to discuss projects related to the management of Purbeck. At the recent meeting, presentations were given on the Woodland Trusts' proposal to plant a tree for every person in the UK, the Corfe Valley vision and HLF Back from the Brink project. Arne Moors remains a key area of focus; Alison Turnock (AONB Biodiversity Officer) has attended two Stakeholder Liaison meetings (in September and October).
  - b. Alison also went on a study visit of some of the National Parks of the Netherlands for a week in June. Other participants included officers from Exmoor, Dartmoor and the Peak District National Parks. Visits were made to four National Parks to gain a greater understanding of their management and the issues associated with them.
- 3.22. **Wild Purbeck: Wytch Farm Landscape & Access Fund**
- a. The Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Panel met in July and approved two applications submitted through FWAG for hedgerow planting and restoration work; further similar projects are welcomed via this route.
  - b. The panel meeting in October considered six applications and one expression of interest. Subject to final approval (and conditions where appropriate), this will lead to grants being offered for three further hedge and woodland projects, one access for all proposal and two cycleways. Further information will be required for the expression of interest which is for a single grazing unit on land owned by the National Trust, RSPB and Natural England.
- 3.23. **Purbeck Heritage Coast: European Diploma for Protected Areas renewal**
- a. The Purbeck Heritage Coast, which gained this prestigious award in 1984, shares it with protected areas around Europe, for 'best examples of their type'. In the UK, there are 4 other award-holding areas: Peak District National Park, Minsmere Nature Reserve, Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve and Fair Isle National Scenic Area.
  - b. An expert's site visit to the Purbeck Heritage Coast was required in 2018 in advance of its to report on the site's management, in particular the extent to which the conditions and recommendations of the award were met.
  - c. In June, a visit was made by Dr Ana Rainho (Specialist on the European Diploma for Protected Areas) to Purbeck to assess the European Diploma award to the Purbeck Heritage Coast which was due to expire in 2019. A programme of site visits was organised which included Durlston, Lulworth, Arne and Studland, with detailed questions being asked at each place. Following this, Ana noted the strength of the conservation partnerships in the area and commended all parties on their management. Renewal of the award was recommended.
  - d. This comes with two proposed conditions:
    - Ensure that the terms of the agreement made with Perenco are being strictly adhered to and the Perenco continues to work to the highest standards.
    - The extension of existing quarries or the opening of new quarries must conform to the "exceptions" principle that they should only be permitted if they do not impair the character



of the Purbeck Heritage Coast as a result of any one or a combination of the following: (a) their scale and length; (b) their negative impact on the landscape, wildlife and the enjoyment of the area by the public or local communities; (c) the practical impossibility of achieving satisfactory restoration and aftercare within a period of five years following the cessation of work

e. Alongside 5 recommendations:

- Promote and improve public transportation and other more sustainable methods of transport, particularly near the most visited sites.
- 2. Monitor the number of the visitors in order to determine its impact on the environment.
- A visitor management strategy should be prepared for the areas with the larger number of visitors in order to avoid any negative impact either in the quality of recreational experience as well as in the natural resources of the Purbeck HC.
- Further investments should be made towards the improvement of the habitat and landscape connectivity within the Purbeck HC.
- Promote the monitoring of the main species and habitats in the area and encourage the partners to coordinate efforts and produce good quality data for all the Diploma area.
- Initiate studies focusing on the biological control of invasive alien species occurring in the Purbeck HC and if deemed necessary, prepare a strategic plan for their control.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND**

3.24. 22 applications with a total request of over £50,000 were received. £21,000 was offered as grant towards:

- a. Dorset Wildlife Trust to deliver a pilot examining natural capital investment, mapping and valuing 'public goods' available in a pilot area and following this with farm advice to determine potential conservation investments. Dorset AONB has proposed this as a 'test' to Defra as it develops an approach to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme
- b. An artist-led project working with schools in Evershot, Maiden Newton, Beaminster and Powerstock leading to a Bluebell Parade in spring 2019.
- c. Dangerous Dads and Muddy Mums, an outdoor family-friendly activity business based in Milton Abbas woods.
- d. Hedgerow conservation with volunteers at Magdalen Farm, near Chard.
- e. A community map at Langton Herring
- f. A research project into past conservation activity on the Purbeck Ridge, to inform future activity (led by FWAGSW).
- g. Community-led conservation management of Pymore reedbed SNCI
- h. Collaborative development of a climate change adaptation framework led by the Dorset Local Nature Partnership
- i. Supplying each Primary School in Dorset with a copy of Robert Macfarlane's The Lost Words, inspiring nature connection. This is accompanied by outdoor learning support.
- j. A wildlife trail at West Bay, promoted by the West Bay Discovery Centre in the old chapel.
- k. A mobile zero-waste shop servicing villages around Bridport, the Green Weigh  
<https://www.facebook.com/thegreenweighbridport/>
- l. A film celebrating Dorset's food heritage and enquiring about its future, by producer Robert Golden. This is as an update to his "Savouring West Dorset" film. An promotional short can be seen here <https://vimeo.com/293583122> (password savourdorset2promo)
- m. Screen Bites – the Second Slice: a series of food-related films shown around Dorset's villages in October, see here for more: <http://screenbites.co.uk/about-us/>

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY**

3.25. **National Grid Visual Impact Provision**

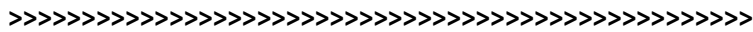
Progress continues to be made on the project to underground over 8km high voltage electricity transmission lines across the South Dorset Ridgeway.



Planning application was approved subject to conditions in July; these were met and the scheme was given full approval in October 2018.

3.26. **High Stoy Conservation Group**

Ian Rees, Countryside Officer is supporting the 'High Stoy Conservation Cluster' a group of farmers and land managers centred around Hilfield Friary who are looking to improve management of their holdings for wildlife.



**ITEM 4: DRAFT AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Item for: Decision

Report by: AONB Manager

Financial implications: £10,000 was made available from the AONB Partnership’s Single Pot fund for development and publication (approved by AONB Partnership Board in Nov 2017). The plan has potential to be used as the key support document for attracting funds for AONB management: the 2014-2019 Management Plan has helped achieve over £7.5M value of delivery coordinated by the AONB Partnership to date.

Summary: This is the key governance document for the AONB. It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to develop such a plan. This, its 4<sup>th</sup> edition (sent with these papers), is the product of wide consultation and a vigorous review process overseen by the Management Plan Review Group given delegated authority to do so by the AONB Partnership Board. Once approved as ‘final text’ by the Partnership Board, it will go to the local authorities for adoption. The final draft and consultation responses can be downloaded here <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/the-dorset-aonb/management-plan>

Recommendation: The Dorset AONB Partnership Board  
a) approves the edits made to the consultation draft and recognises this version as final, and  
b) recommends it for adoption by the relevant local authorities and the Partnership’s constituent bodies.  
c) Recognises the effort made by the AONB Review Group

4.1. **REVIEW PROCESS**

The process was approved by the AONB Partnership Board in May 2017, and has engaged numerous expert stakeholders, partner organisations, community representatives and members of the public in a 12-month programme of review, re-drafting and formal consultation.

4.2. **REVIEW GROUP**

The process has been assisted by a Review Group on three key tasks, namely:

- a. Plan structure
- b. Consultation draft
- c. Draft to propose to the Partnership Board

This group has had substantial and meaningful input to the process and has been a great assistance to the AONB Manager. This group comprises Will Bond, Ken Buchan, Michael Dower, Hannah Jefferson, Hilary Jordan, Matt Low, Adrian Ragbourne, Luke Rake, Alison Turnock, Jim White, and Kate Wood.

#### 4.3. **CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- a. Consultation with key stakeholders has been ‘front-loaded’ in this review with over 50 people involved in pre-revision workshops (‘expert review groups’).
- b. The AONB Forum was used to gather opinion on issues and options from the 57 attendees; the audience mainly from parish / town councils or other community groups/partnerships.
- c. The 12-week public consultation period was widely publicised online via the AONB’s social media channels.
- d. All councillors in the AONB’s 5 local authorities were informed by email as were all the AONB’s Town and Parish clerks.
- e. Copies of the draft were available in public libraries and at local authority front desks.
- f. The team was also available to answer ad hoc enquiries in person, via telephone, email and social media.

#### 4.4. **CONSULTATION RESPONSES SUMMARY**

- a. The short response online questionnaire attracted 174 respondents, showing a broad level of support for the current direction of AONB Partnership work, and evidence to strengthen action planning.
- b. There were 31 full responses, with a total of around 350 points of support, clarification, challenge, enquiry and proposed amendment.
- c. These full responses were from 10 parish/town councils, 7 residents, 4 NGOs, 3 community partnerships, 2 local authorities, 2 businesses, 1 landowner/farmer and 2 ‘other’.
- d. By comparison, the consultation to the draft plan of 2013 attracted 32 respondents.

#### 4.5. **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS ON THE CONSULTATION DRAFT**

- a. A large degree of support for the AONB and this plan was demonstrated
- b. There was some concern that this plan lacked a programme of definable actions.
- c. Frustration was shown from opposing ends of opinion related to development. On one side, real frustration at developments approved within the AONB. On the other side, frustration that protection of the AONB may displace development pressure to treasured areas outside the boundary. All of these respondents are affected personally by proposed developments. Many of these comments also helped refine the final draft.
- d. The majority of comments demonstrated support; a significant volume provides evidence from which to prioritise action and engage partners; a large number made suggestions to improve accuracy or language.
- e. Some suggested changes which were not adopted, either because they were not entirely relevant or that they requested a level of detail which was not appropriate to this high level policy document.

#### 4.6. **SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSULTATION DRAFT**

- a. All amendments have approval of the Review Group
- b. A new Chairman’s draft addresses a demonstrated need to articulate the scale of the challenge to conserve and enhance this landscape.
- c. Chapters 1 & 2: the definition of natural beauty has been strengthened.
- d. Chapter 3: new paragraph outlining the impact of the previous plan in development management.
- e. Chapter 4: issues and opportunities section substantially re-worked.
- f. Chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8 do not necessarily flow as they might – for instance, ‘landscape’ appears as the landscape approach, again as a defining element of the special qualities, again in landscape character. This issue may be best solved in the online version.
- g. Chapter 9
  - the labelling of the Objectives and Policies has changed, as a design-led suggestion, from e.g. Objective TWL1 to A1, and from Policy TWL1a to A1a.
  - in each policy section a list of key partners has been added



- d. How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets.
- e. The financing of National Parks and AONBs.
- f. How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations.
- g. How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing.
- h. How well National Parks and AONBs support communities.

Expanding on work already underway, the review will also take advice from Natural England on the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

### 5.3. Timetable

The review was announced in May 2018. Tom Munro joined a small delegation from the NAAONB to meet with Julian Glover in June. A series of site visits commenced; it the intention of the panel that all AONBs and National Parks have been visited by at least one panel member by late spring 2019. A call for evidence was launched in October, with a deadline of December 18<sup>th</sup>. The panel will make recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment in summer 2019; it is likely that the final recommendations will be released in September 2019.

### 5.4. Dorset visit

Julian Glover and Sarah Mukherjee visited in September, supported by Louise Leighton-McTague, Defra's secondment to act as secretariat to the panel. The visit was designed in partnership with the Dorset & East Devon National Park Campaign group (D&EDNP) to meet the visitors' expectations. Over a day and a half, the panel visited:

- a. Stoborough Heath, where they met the AONB Chairman with Laurie Clark and David Brown from National Trust. Landscape-scale heathland restoration was discussed, as was recreational pressures and the concept of relative wildness.
- b. Kingston Maurward College to meet Luke Rake (Dorset LEP), Richard Brown (DAONB) and Richard Brown (D&EDNP). Development pressures, housing and affordability and economic potential were discussed.
- c. Hardy's Cottage and Egdon Heath, to examine areas of high quality landscape outside the AONB.
- d. Dorset Wildlife Trust's (DWT) Kingcombe Reserve where they were joined by the Trust's chair Jo Davies and Director Imogen Davenport with Ian Rees (DAONB). Farming for conservation and environmental land management schemes were discussed.
- e. Gould's Hill, to see a group of volunteers restoring a length of stone wall through the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership where they also met Jill Hearing (DAONB).
- f. Hardy's Monument and Black Down, where they were joined by Steve Wallis (DCC), to talk about the importance of the historic environment in Dorset's landscape and the National Grid's undergrounding project.
- g. The Jurassic Coast at Eype, where they were joined by Jurassic Coast Trust's Alex O'Dwyer and Sam Rose alongside Chris Woodruff (East Devon AONB), to discuss World Heritage Site management and protections and visitor management.
- h. Eggardon Hill, to look over the Marshwood Vale and Brit Valley to discuss the next landscape-scale project ambition.
- i. Cerne Abbas Giant to discuss the potential for inland community-led sustainable tourism.

In addition, the visitors hosted an evening meal at Kingcombe with Ian Alexander (NE), Sophie Alexander (CLA), Richard Brown (D&EDNP), Simon Cripps (DWT), Michael Dower (Local Action Group), Mike Harries (DCC), George Hosford (NFU), Hannah Jefferson (NT), Luke Rake (Dorset LEP) and Tom Munro (DAONB).

- 5.5. **Call for evidence**  
The panel has invited responses from a wide range of stakeholders, in particular people who live in a national park or AONB, run a business in them, enjoy visiting, care about landscapes and biodiversity. The panel are also committed to receiving evidence from NAAONB and individual AONB Partnerships. The consultation is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-call-for-evidence>
- 5.6. **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBS RESPONSE**  
Significant work has been conducted through NAAONB following a national gathering of lead officers. This prospectus is likely to be available before the Board Meeting and will be made available. It is anticipated that it will focus on:
- 5.7. **Status and recognition:** there is a lot to build on; this country's rural natural beauty is cherished but the mechanisms and structures for management are poorly understood. Enhanced status could be achieved by
- a. strengthening the Section 85 duty of regard with government leadership and advocacy
  - b. future-proofing management of these landscapes with alignment with the principles of the 25-year Environment Plan
- 5.8. **Governance and management:** AONB management structures are known for achieving a lot with a little, and are great conveners or brokers for positive action. However, AONB Partnerships lack status and teeth to address poor landscape management, and there is no statutory duty to deliver the Management Plan. Governance and accountability could be strengthened by:
- a. A new legal status for designated landscape management organisations, with a statutory duty to implement Management Plans.
  - b. Members of the partnerships could have a duty to act in the best interests of the designated landscape, and its conservation and enhancement.
  - c. Government could recognise designated landscape management organisations as local delivery vehicles, embedding this in the Agriculture and Environment Acts.
- 5.9. **Strategic planning and development management:** AONB management bodies have strengthened AONB policies in local plans and provide planning guidance and advice to decision-making bodies. However the natural beauty of this country's designated landscapes is being eroded as protective policies have become subservient to policies driving large-scale development, decisions are not made consistently and the pressures are immense. Stronger protections could be achieved by:
- a. Statutory consultee status for designated landscape partnerships
  - b. Joined-up, cross-departmental policy approach to sustainable development in designated landscapes
  - c. Ability of designated landscape management organisations to 'call in' specific cases for scrutiny.
- 5.10. **Land management:** designated landscape organisations have achieved a lot for wildlife enhancement, health and wellbeing benefits and have an appropriate understanding and structure to direct landscape enhancements. However, there continues a background decline in wildlife abundance and the quality of these landscapes' natural assets, additionally AONBs' responses to recreational pressures are necessary but unfunded (as it is not a purpose of designation). Increased capacity for land management change in designated landscapes could be achieved by:
- a. Consistent policy towards land use in designated landscapes across governments
  - b. Acknowledging designated landscape management organisations as having a vital role in restoring nature and natural assets, embedded in the Agriculture and Environment Acts with a responsibility for delivery of land management grant schemes making payments for public goods.
  - c. Extending the boundaries of coastal AONBs seaward to enable joined-up intercoastal zone management





funding of a further 25% of core funding from other sources. It is hoped and expected that Local Authority partner contributions to all Core Functions continue at a minimum of 25%, or even at the same levels that have previously been invested.

Contributions from bodies other than local authority partners and/or earned income can be used to support core functions; this would release Defra-origin funds for other activity. Core Functions are defined in the Defra MoA and as such provide guidance on minimum standards to allow successful operation of an AONB unit and the delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

- b. SDF: The SDF was established as a Ministerial initiative and has political support. Defra believes the previous success of SDF will ensure its continuation in a meaningful way without the need to impose minimum levels of spending, which would go against the ethos of an interdependent and trusting relationship with AONB Partnerships. Individual SDF initiatives will be identified as part of an AONB's programme of work. SDF will remain as a visible funding stream in the AONB family and should continue to be recorded and good practice registered to inform Defra and key partners. There are opportunities to use SDF to add value by encouraging greater uptake of innovative, often community-based, projects. The SDF programme has associated guidance prepared by Natural England which steers the kinds of projects to be developed. This guidance was revised in 2009 to place greater emphasis on encouraging innovation and risk-taking, as well as meeting AONB Management Plan objectives. These risk and innovation elements help clarify the distinction between SDF and other funding streams. Innovative SDF projects should be assessed from local, regional and national perspectives. We make SDF available to projects through a competitive process.
- c. PROJECTS: AONB Partnerships are free to determine how they use resources to deliver projects. If 100% AONB project funding is the only way to achieve the desired outcome, this is for the Partnerships to decide in developing their programme. Defra believes that delivery of AONB Management Plan objectives is generally greater and more sustainable if undertaken in partnership, particularly for large scale or landscape scale projects. It therefore encourages all AONB Partnerships to use their project funding to help lever in additional resources. The ability and willingness of partners to contribute to projects will be variable from partner to partner and from year to year. It is recognised that staffing costs can be met by project funding.

### 6.3. INCOME FORECAST

The Dorset AONB's Local Authorities are intending to maintain their contributions in transition to becoming part of Dorset Council. The team also has an external fundraising target.

Total "single pot" income via the Dorset Council & Defra:

Source	2019-2020
Defra TOTAL	£ 244,022
Dorset Council	£ 54,510
From reserves	
Earned income	£ 8,055
TOTAL non-Defra income	£ 62,565
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 306,587</b>

The team has confidence it can meet the income target from management charges on established projects and those currently unconfirmed.

### 6.4. CORE COSTS

Efforts continue to 'projectise' a reasonable proportion of the team's overheads depending on any restrictions imposed by the funding body: all projects make a contribution towards accommodation at a minimum.

Maximum core costs are 4 times the non-Defra income: £250,260; our projected costs are less.

