

The background is a green-tinted illustration of a landscape. It features a winding road that leads to a bridge with several pillars. In the foreground, there are rolling hills and a large, dark rock formation. The overall style is painterly and atmospheric.

Getting Things Done

18. The AONB Partnership

18.1. Special characteristics regarding the Cranborne Chase AONB Partnership:



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

Aim

The organisations that make up the AONB Partnership fully understand and take responsibility for ‘conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape’.

Achievements to date

- The preparation, publication and implementation of Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plans 2004-2009, 2009-2014 and this current document.
- Encouragement of additional partners and joint working, such as:
 - Historic Environment Actions Plans - partners include English Heritage, archaeology groups, relevant Local Authority Officers, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), local experts and volunteers amongst many others
 - South West Farmland Bird Initiative - partners include, Wessex Water, Natural England, the National Farmers Union and farmers/landowners
 - Ancient and Veteran Trees Pilot Project - partners include Hampshire County Council, Woodland Trust and volunteers
 - Tranquillity Study - partners include CPRE and volunteers
 - Sustainable Rural Tourism Project - partners include Sowing SEEDS Leader funding, South West Wiltshire Area Board, local Chambers of Commerce, local businesses and volunteers
 - Sowing SEEDS Leader programme - with Community Partnership Executive of North Dorset, Local Action Group (LAG) members and local communities



Key Issues

1. The commitment of partners to be directly or indirectly involved in delivering Management Plan objectives varies widely amongst the 18 partner organisations
2. Some partners are not fully aware of the range of documents and guidance produced by the AONB Partnership that could assist them in their duty to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB'
3. Frequent personnel changes within Local Authorities and other organisations often results in a lack of awareness and knowledge about the AONB, from new staff

The Issues Explained

- 18.2. The AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 is a strategic plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB drawn together on behalf of the 18 organisations that make up the Partnership. It has been endorsed by all 18 partner organisations and, in addition, has been formally adopted by the 9 Local Authorities.
- 18.3. Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 it is a legal duty for all relevant authorities to 'have regard to' the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the area. These relevant authorities include all statutory bodies and all tiers of government, including parish councils and holders of public office.
- 18.4. For government, local authorities, other public bodies and other 'relevant authorities' active support of the implementation of this plan is the key to satisfying their 'Section 85 ' duty.
- 18.5. The fundamental purpose of this Management Plan is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. Co-ordinated and collective action is needed by a wide range of interests to ensure that the AONB continues to provide valued environmental benefits, including clean air, water and food, maintains strong, vibrant local communities and is enjoyed by future generations.
- 18.6. The AONB Partnership has worked with a wide range of partners in the delivery of actions on the ground. It will be increasingly important throughout this next plan period to retain existing partners and attract new partners.
- 18.7. Local Authorities are large organisations and often have staff changes. The communication skills of Partnership representatives need to be exceptionally good to ensure relevant documents are continually fed down through each organisation and contact between the AONB and relevant staff is maintained
- 18.8. It is vital that as many people as possible are engaged in helping to achieve Plan objectives. More emphasis will be placed on encouraging volunteers and communities and interest groups to become involved in helping make the vision for this AONB a reality.
- 18.9. The success of Plan depends upon good relationships and joint working between public bodies at all levels, statutory and non-statutory agencies and organisations, farmers and land managers, community groups, interest groups and individuals. The diverse challenges and accelerating pace of change that face the AONB must be seen as an opportunity for all sectors of the community, in its widest sense, to work together. Pooling resources, sharing expertise and working together present the best opportunities for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of this AONB.



Chalk Downs - Clare Shepherd

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
P	<i>All current and new AONB partners work pro-actively together to jointly achieve Management Plan objectives</i>	P1	Existing and new partners identify and deliver shared aims/objectives.
		P2	Each AONB partner signs up to deliver at least two actions in the annual AONB Delivery Plan by the May/June Partnership Panel meeting.
		P3	Each partner ensures that all protocols, Position Statements, Fact Sheets, Good Practice and other Guidance documents are known about, understood, used by all relevant departments and officers.
		P4	Ensure high-level officers and Members are aware of the AONB designation, purpose(s) and duty towards it, through Member briefings, training sessions and the Annual Forum.



19. Funding

Aim

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

Achievements to date

- Sowing SEEDS Leader programme - £1.5m.
- Heritage Lottery Fund, Parish Archive Project - £50k.
- Natural England, SW Farmland Bird Initiative - £28k pa (4 years).
- Wessex Water partner funding for SW Farmland Bird Initiative - £25k pa until 2017.
- Additional Local Authority contributions for specific projects e.g. Ancient and Veteran Trees Pilot Project (Hampshire County Council) and Heritage Lottery Fund application (Dorset County Council).
- Campaign to Protect Rural England - contribution to AONB tranquillity study and the Parish Appraisal Good Practice Guidance.

Key issues

1. Exchequer funding is likely to continue to decrease and may yet experience more severe reductions, whilst government expects the highest level of protection for AONBs.
2. Local Authority budgets are diminishing whilst demand for their services and funding increases.
3. Applications to external grant programmes are becoming increasingly competitive with many organisations and conservation groups experiencing reductions or cuts to funding.
4. Opportunities to pursue additional and alternative funding sources and mechanisms are crucial and demand the necessary resources to be allocated to this task.
5. Local Authority Partnerships, such as the AONB, are ineligible to apply to certain funding programmes e.g. Reaching Communities and some Trusts and Foundations.

The Issues Explained

- 19.2. Central Government and Local Authority funding is likely to continue to reduce over the plan period. Potential income has been lost through grants being cut or reduced; Local Authorities are often no longer able to continue some of their work, such as biodiversity partnership coordination and there is increased competition for funding to key funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 19.3. It will be increasingly important to ensure that the purpose of AONBs is widely communicated both locally and nationally. Cranborne Chase AONB will maintain a close relationship with, and input to the work of, the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONBs). This body represents the AONB Family on national issues including policy and advocacy, communications, training and securing resources.
- 19.4. The Partnership must have regard to the skilled staff resources at its disposal and the financial projections over the next five years. The resources for delivering all Plan objectives have not been secured at the time of writing this Plan. Many of the most significant actions will require the pooling of resources by several organisations and/or success in attracting funding from a range of public, private and voluntary sector sources.

- 19.5. Given the increasingly tight financial circumstances there will be a need for all partners and the AONB team to prioritise workloads to ensure a strong focus on the core AONB purpose, to ‘conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area’.
- 19.6. It will be increasingly important for the AONB Partnership to secure external funding to deliver project work on the ground, particularly with ongoing reductions from central and local government. The Partnership proposes to set up a charitable enterprise such as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This entity would sit alongside the AONB Partnership and have purposes that align with those of the Partnership. The charitable enterprise would be able to apply for funds which are currently unavailable to a local authority partnership organisation.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
F	<i>Secure resources are in place to support the core functions and project aspirations of the AONB Partnership throughout this Plan period and beyond</i>	F1	Undertake an assessment of current and future resource requirements to devise a future strategy to attract external funding to achieve objectives throughout this Plan period and beyond (Friends Group, Visitor Payback etc)
		F2	All funding partners transfer their agreed percentage contribution to the core AONB budget each year, as set out in the Memorandum of Agreement
		F3	Work with the National Association of AONBs to lobby the appropriate government department, currently Defra, for a long term, secure funding commitment
		F4	Assess options for development of a charitable enterprise (e.g. Charitable Incorporated Organisation) to submit external bids to funding programmes that are ineligible to the Partnership, to help achieve AONB purposes
		F5	Actively seek funding, and partnership working, from non Local Authority partner organisations for specific core and project work, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, Area Boards and Health and Wellbeing Boards
		F6	Actively engage with future Leader and other EU/national initiatives to secure funding for appropriate project work



20. Implementation

Who implements the Management Plan?

- 20.1. The whole Partnership has a key role to implement the Management Plan through individual actions as well as partnership working. Whilst the team takes a lead in much of the implementation work and initiates new and innovative projects, it is the responsibility and duty of all partners to take positive action to conserve and enhance the AONB.
- 20.2. An annual **Partnership Delivery Plan** sets out work or 'action' to be taken in each of the 5 years covered by the Plan. The small AONB team has the role of facilitator or advocate for part of the annual work, whilst leading in some areas. However, significant parts of the annual Delivery Plans will only be effectively delivered with the assistance of partner organisations, working together in an integrated way to achieve multiple objectives.
- 20.3. It is recognised that it is absolutely essential to involve partners fully in agreeing actions, responsibilities and resource allocations to secure their real commitment to Management Plan tasks that require their involvement.
- 20.4. There is a growing body of volunteers both within and outside the area and it will be increasingly important to engage and support them to assist with delivering work programmes.
- 20.5. This is an ambitious Management Plan. Successful implementation is beyond the resources of just the Partnership or AONB team alone. The whole Partnership has a key role to implement the Management Plan through individual actions and partnership working.
- 20.6. By helping to implement this Plan, government, local authorities, public bodies and other 'relevant authorities' will be contributing to their 'Section 85' duty to "have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB". It is important that the strategies, plans and action plans of key local, regional and national authorities, agencies and organisations take account of and reflect the vision, objectives and policies of this plan.



Ansty PYD

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
I	<i>All current and potential partners are committed to and involved with the achievement of Management Plan objectives</i>	I1	Foster closer working relationships with local authority officers and members to ensure understanding of management plan objectives and integration of work where appropriate
		I2	Ensure the work of topic groups is focused on the management plan objectives
		I3	Establish and maintain close relationships with external organisations and bodies, both public and private, whose programmes of work could support the delivery of management plan objectives
		I4	Strengthen working relationships with local parishes, communities, landowners, volunteers and other stakeholders to improve local delivery of the management plan objectives



21. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 21.1. Monitoring and evaluation of this Management Plan and the actions outlined within the Delivery Plan is an essential task for the AONB Team and is grant-aided as part of the core activities undertaken. There are essentially two types of monitoring work:
- **Performance monitoring** - to establish whether actions outlined within the Delivery Plan have been undertaken. This is an important activity and will be reported on a regular basis to the AONB Partnership and Partnership Forum. An **Annual Report** will summarise the activities of both the AONB Team and partners. It will include details of the tasks undertaken, the effect upon the AONB (outcomes) and the funding and other resources employed.
 - **Condition monitoring** - to establish if actions undertaken have had the desired effect, or impact, on the AONB. To monitor condition effectively, initial base line information is required in order that comparisons can be made and an evaluation of change over time. Some base line data is currently held by the AONB.
- 21.2. Monitoring and evaluation requires resources and it is therefore crucial that those attributes, or features, of the AONB that are a meaningful measure of AONB quality are chosen. These form a suite of indicators that can be measured, monitored and evaluated over time.
- 21.3. Natural England has developed a 'Monitoring Framework for Protected Landscapes' to provide a consistent framework for measuring environmental outcomes in protected areas. It will provide evidence to inform the next review the AONB Management Plan, review the 'State of the AONB' and demonstrate the benefits of protected landscape designation.
- 21.4. Indicators have been chosen and set out for each of the ten chapters in this Plan, for the following reasons:
- they focus on the primary reasons for designation ie landscape, special qualities, natural and historic environment and management of land
 - they are readily available and can be cut to the AONB boundary
 - they add to baseline data for measuring the 'State of the AONB'
 - they add to evidence required for funding bids
 - desired indicators that will only be acquired through additional resources or with the assistance of volunteers. (*The latter indicators are in italics.*)

Landscape:

- Changes identified through analysis of fixed point photography at a minimum of every five years (AONB)
- Land use change (Defra)
- Take up of relevant themed groups of ES options that contribute to conserving and enhancing landscape character (NE)
- Change in % of AONB recorded as 'most tranquil'
- Changes in extent of dark night skies (Skyglow map; Dark Sky Association)
- Length of overhead power cables laid underground (SSE)

Natural Environment:

- Number and capacity of renewable energy applications permitted/constructed (LAs)
- Change in ecological status of rivers and surface water bodies (EA)
- Change in % of protected landscape managed under ES agreements (NE)
- Change in total annual values of AE schemes in AONB (NE)
- % change in condition of SSSIs (NE)
- Area of broad and priority habitats within AONB (NE)
- % change of area under relevant themed groups of ES options (NE)
- *Frequency and abundance of farmland bird species at selected holdings (NE/HLS)*
- *Existence of rare arable plants identified in 2011 survey as potential 'hot spots' (£/vols)*
- *Change in carbon footprint of AONB team office and activities (£/vols)*

Historic and Cultural Environment:

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

Rural Land Management:

- Changes in farmland type (arable/grazing etc) (Defra)
- Changes in farm numbers / sizes / employment (Defra)
- Changes in numbers of livestock (Defra)
- Changes in total area of woodland (subdivided) (FC)
- Changes in area of woodland managed (including EWGS/felling licences) (FC)
- *Changes to game and pest management practices (£/vols)*

Rural Economy:

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



Planning and Transportation:

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

Viable Rural Communities:

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

Awareness and Understanding:

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

Involvement and Learning:

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

Access and Wellbeing:

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

Compliance note to accompany the AONB Management Plan 2014-19

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EiA) were all undertaken for the AONB Management Plan 2009-14. These have all undergone review to ensure the Management Plan 2014-19 continues to comply with these legislative requirements.

