



# Agenda

## Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

**Friday, 20 April 2018, 10.00 am**

**Council House, Malvern Hills District  
Council**

**Avenue Road  
Malvern  
WR14 3AF**

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**Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee**  
**Friday, 20 April 2018, 10.00 am,**

**Members**

**Elected Members:**

Mrs G Rees (Chairman)	Malvern Hills Conservators
Dr K A Pollock (Vice Chairman)	Worcestershire County Council
Mr T Baker	Malvern Hills District Council
Mr S Bosley	Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
Mr J Fryman	Worcestershire Association of Local Councils
Ms E Holton	Herefordshire County Council
Mr A Johnson	Herefordshire County Council
Mrs C O'Donnell	Malvern Hills District Council
Mr P A Tuthill	Worcestershire County Council
Mr C Williams	Forest of Dean District Council

**Non-Elected  
members:**

Mr W Barnes	Forestry Commission
Prof R Bryant	Hereford & Worcester Earth Heritage Trust
Ms S Faulkner	NFU West Midlands
Mr I George	Historic England
Ms D Griffiths	Natural England
Mr M Hammond	Hereford and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
Mr J Hervey-Bathurst	County Land & Business Association
Dr R Williams	Campaign to Protect Rural England

**Co-Opted Members:**

Mr A Lee	Herefordshire Local Access Forum
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**Agenda**

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	<b>Apologies and Substitutes</b>	
2	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
3	<b>Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting</b>	

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Thursday, 5 April 2018

Item No	Subject	Page No
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2017.	
4	<b>The Ridges and Ditches of the Northern Malvern Hills</b> To receive a presentation from George Demidowicz (an academic Geographer) on past attempts to enclose the northern hills.	
5	<b>AONB Budget and Work Programme 2018/19</b> To receive a report from Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager.	1 - 14
6	<b>The Review of the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-19)</b> To receive a report from Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager.	15 - 30
7	<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b> To receive a report from David Armitage, AONB Partnership Assistant Manager.	31 - 32
8	<b>Information Items</b> To note the items for information.	33 - 34
9	<b>Verbal Reports from Partners</b>	
10	<b>Dates of Future Meetings</b> The next meeting will be held on:  <b>9 November 2018</b> at 10.00am in the Council Chamber at Malvern Hills District Council	
	If you have any other contributions that you would like to bring to the meeting, please contact Paul Esrich tel: 01684 560616.	

## **MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **20 April 2018**

## **AONB BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

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### **Background**

1. A grant application to support the core work of the AONB Partnership in 2018/19 was considered by members of the Steering Group before being submitted to Defra in January 2018. NB. flexibility needs to be employed when delivering the AONB budget to ensure that it best supports the AONB Partnership. Therefore, details of the budget/work programme may change through the year and money may be moved from one head to another to reflect this.

### **Summary**

2. A summary of the core budget and expected key work tasks is provided in Appendix 1 and 3 respectively. Anticipated budget figures from previous years are provided in brackets for comparison. The main points to note are as follows.

### **Budget**

3. The total budget for 2018/19 is expected to be £187,976 (£183,875). The increase is the result of a real terms protection in funding to AONB Partnerships from Central Government but also reflects the actual contribution made by Herefordshire Council including project contributions. This inflationary protection was signalled in the 2015 Spending Review and subsequently confirmed by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs in February 2016. It has also been confirmed that the real terms protection will extend throughout this Spending Review period, until 2019/20.
4. Of the total, £165,104 can be identified as 'core' funding with £22,872 (£25,991) allocated to the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). Central government is providing all of the funding for the SDF and a maximum of 75% of the total core budget, a combined total of £146,700 (£144,220). Local authorities in the area are expected to provide £41,276 of match funding to core costs in the following proportions:

Herefordshire Council - £15,536<sup>1</sup>  
Worcestershire County Council - £13,268  
Malvern Hills District Council - £11,000  
Forest of Dean District Council - £872  
Gloucestershire County Council - £600

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<sup>1</sup> This amount includes a contribution to project work.

## **Voluntary Contributions**

5. At its meeting on 26/04/13, JAC members agreed that there was merit in inviting Parish and Town Councils to make voluntary contributions to the work of the AONB Partnership. An initial request was made to a small number of Councils and, following some success, a small number of additional Councils were contacted. Appendix 2 summarises contributions received since 2014/15. We are waiting to hear about contributions for 2018/19. Whilst some individual contributions may be small they can add up to very decent totals which are useful when added to the overall budget for delivering the Partnership's work programme. Financial contributions can be seen as a tangible expression of how local councils value the work of the AONB Partnership.

## **Staff**

6. Salaries look set to rise by 2% for staff of Worcestershire County Council.

## **Work Priorities**

7. As ever, the Unit's work programme for 2018/19 continues to be centred around the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.

## **Project Funding**

8. Outwith Core and SDF it is expected that over £35,000 will be spent on the Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project during 2018/19.

## **Recommendation**

1. **The Committee is recommended to:**
  - a) **Note the budget for 2018/19;**
  - b) **Comment on the overall direction and work priorities for the year ahead.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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Appendix 1 – Budget for Malvern Hills AONB Partnership in 2018/19

Element	Budget							
	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
<b>Staff (costs inc. salary, NI, super, training, travel, NI etc)</b>								
AONB Manager	£52,160	£52,410	£52,405	£51,910	£50,400	£50,500	£49,780	£49,560
AONB Assistant Manager	£39,510	£39,600	£39,500	£39,300	£38,220	£38,320	£37,770	£37,600
AONB Technical Support Officer	£15,650	£15,770	£15,770	£15,570	£15,160	£14,960	£15,488	£15,486
Strategy Officer/Planning Advice	£8,000	£7,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000
Project Officer					£3,669			
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£115,320</b>	<b>£114,780</b>	<b>£115,675</b>	<b>£114,780</b>	<b>£115,449</b>	<b>£111,780</b>	<b>£111,038</b>	<b>£110,646</b>
<b>Accommodation/office equipment</b>	£9,072	£8,742	£8,742	£8,742	£8,242	£8,242	£8,242	£8,242
<b>Partnership budget for PR, events etc.</b>								
NAAONB membership	£2,575	£2,400	£2,400					
Annual review	£400	£400	£400					
Small grants scheme for landscape and biodiversity improvements	£3,000	£3,600	£3,600					
Landscape scale project development	£3,000	£3,500	£3,500					
External advice	£1,500							
State of AONB report	£5,000							
Management Plan review	£9,000							
Large projects	£5,000	£6,980	£4,380					
Communications	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000					
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£31,475</b>	<b>£24,880</b>	<b>£22,280</b>	<b>£22,280</b>	<b>£22,111</b>	<b>£27,236</b>	<b>£27,300</b>	<b>£31,887</b>
<b>Partnership running costs (Council support, IT, personnel, finance etc.)</b>	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237
<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b>	£22,872	£25,991	£25,502	£24,000	£24,000	£34,807	£45,140	£50,089
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>£187,976</b>	<b>£183,875</b>	<b>£181,436</b>	<b>£179,039</b>	<b>£179,039</b>	<b>£191,302</b>	<b>£200,957</b>	<b>£210,101</b>

## Appendix 2 – Voluntary contributions from Parish/Town Councils

Organisation	Contribution			
	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Colwall PC	£750	£750		£1,000
Cradley PC	£100	£100	£200	£100
Ledbury PC				£350
Malvern Wells PC	£1,600	£1,600	£800	£800
Little Malvern & Welland PC	£250	£250	£250	
West Malvern PC	£300	£300	£300	£300
Wellington Heath PC			£500	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,000</b>	<b>£3,000</b>	<b>£2,050</b>	<b>£2,550</b>

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### Appendix 3 – Unit Work Programme for 2018/19

<b>Mgt Plan Policy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
	Review the AONB Management Plan	PE
<b>Landscape</b>		
LP1 Manage the landscape of the AONB in accordance with key documents such as the AONB Landscape Strategy, LCA and HLCs.	Ensure that comments on planning responses incorporate wider landscape issues.	PE
LP2 Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.	<p>Work with the Three Counties Agricultural Society to develop a Master plan for the showground.</p> <p>Work with the Three Counties Agricultural Society to enhance 3 landscape elements at the showground</p> <p>Ensure that proposals for biodiversity enhancements under BP3 are landscape 'proofed'.</p>	PE
LP2 Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.	Liaise with WPD and landowners to ensure the completion of x undergrounding schemes.	DA
LP3 Identify and promote opportunities for positive landscape change to landowners, managers, government and all those with an influence over land.	<p>Promote AONB guidance to all interested parties.</p> <p>Work with MHT to secure long-term management of the Commons by grazing</p>	<p>PE</p> <p>DA</p>
LP4 Promote greater awareness and appreciation of the landscape character of the AONB among residents and visitors, providing opportunities for them to be involved in identifying and conserving locally distinctive features, views and landscapes.	<p>Consider re-running the AONB photography competition.</p> <p>Develop proposals for establishing Dark Sky Discovery Sites in the AONB (with MHC).</p>	
LP5 Undertake surveys and	Compile and produce a State of	

research to better understand and monitor the condition, and rate of change, of landscape character.	the AONB report (for publication April 2019)	
LP6 Ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation proposals are consistent with the special qualities of the AONB and minimise any adverse effects on the area.	Ensure that climate change resilience talks and developments account for landscape character.	
LP7 Identify and support appropriate climate change mitigation works, such as new habitat creation, within and adjacent to the AONB.	Ensure that climate change considerations are incorporated into the review of the AONB Management Plan.	
LP8 Increase understanding and awareness of possible landscape effects of, and responses to, climate change.		
<b>Geodiversity</b>		
GP1 Conserve the geodiversity resource in line with Geodiversity Action Plans.		
GP2 Secure best practice in geodiversity management within and adjacent to designated sites.	Support and resource H&WEHT volunteers in managing x Local Geological Sites (LGS)	DA
GP3 Undertake survey, research and monitoring to secure complete information on the state of the AONB's geodiversity resource.		
GP4 Promote greater understanding of the geological value of the AONB, its links with the historic environment and the need for its protection and management.	Publicise Malvern Hills stone bank.	
<b>Biodiversity</b>		
BP1 Conserve, enhance and expand key habitats and populations of key species in line with local biodiversity priorities and the England Biodiversity Strategy 2020.	Manage and support a TCTOP Project Officer  Deliver year 3/4 of the TCTOP.	PE  KH/PE  PE
BP2 Restore the condition of degraded habitats in line with local and national biodiversity priorities.	X traditional orchards managed within TCTOP area	
BP2 Restore the condition of degraded habitats in line with local	Work with partners to apply for at least 1 grant within the Worcestershire Natural	

and national biodiversity priorities.	Networks programme.	
BP3 Enhance the wildlife value of the countryside and achieve greater buffering and connectivity between key habitats within the AONB and between the AONB and the countryside beyond.	Complete year 2 of the road verges pilot project (with some funding from Natural networks).	PE
BP4 In exercising development control decisions, secure developer contributions to enhance the natural environment.	Work with local communities (in particular Welland and Malvern Wells Parish Councils) in securing relevant developer contributions (as and when development proposals arise)	PE
BP5 Undertake survey and research to provide decision-makers with accurate and appropriate data.	<p>Collect new data to inform landscape scale conservation in the north of the AONB.</p> <p>Progress year 2 of the 'Searching for missing species in the Malverns' project.</p> <p>Identify, collect and send biological data collected as part of the planning process to the appropriate BRC.</p>	PE
BP6 Improve knowledge and understanding of the AONB's biodiversity, to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and actions.	As for BP5.	
BP7 Safeguard biodiversity from potential damaging impacts arising from development or other activities.		
<b>Historic Environment</b>		
HP1 Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment of the AONB in accordance with key documents such as Historic Landscape Characterisations, Conservation Area Appraisals and English Heritage advice and guidance.	Work with EH, MHDC and others to secure a progressive solution to redevelopment at Hawthorn's Farmyard. This to form a good practice case study on farmstead redevelopment in accordance with county and national guidance.	PE
HP2 Identify and improve the evidence base of locally important heritage assets of the AONB in order to understand better the	Support communities in the AONB to submit proposals for listing of locally important heritage assets (in	DA

significance and condition of the historic environment, which will underpin future policy.	Worcestershire part of AONB)  Research SAM and Listed Building condition as part of the State of the AONB review.	
HP3 Prepare and review appropriate management documents for key heritage assets to improve future conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.		
HP4 Promote greater public understanding of, and engagement with, the historic environment of the AONB.		
HP5 Encourage the sustainable use of historic buildings, particularly those identified as being at risk.	Liaise with owners and LA buildings conservation officers to help restore the condition of two listed buildings	DA
<b>Farming and Forestry</b>		
FP1 Encourage the take-up of grant options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB.	Deliver year 1 of the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund west of the Malvern Hills.  Work with NE and others to ensure that new CS grants benefit x owners in the AONB.	DA
FP2 Bring woodlands, orchards and other characteristic habitats into favourable conservation condition through management regimes that provide an economic return; for example, through the production of timber, wood fuel and other sustainable uses.	Liaise with owners of PAWS woodlands and work with the WT PAWS Officer to develop restoration plans for 2 AONB woodlands.  X orchards managed through the TCTOP.	DA  KH
FP3 Ensure that all new woodland planting in the AONB is largely of native species; no more than 20% being non-native species.		
FP4 Promote targeted native woodland creation in appropriate locations.	Work with Malvern Community Forest and other partners to identify and promote woodland creation opportunities East of the Malvern Hills	PE/DA
FP5 Support appropriate measures to monitor and control pests, diseases and invasive non-native	Re-survey 'baseline' ash trees in AONB for signs of Ash dieback.	

plant and animal species that damage biodiversity resources.		
FP6 Promote local and seasonal produce and support the development of local services and markets.		
<p>FP7 Identify and promote good agricultural practices that encourage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustainable utilisation of soil, minimising erosion</li> <li>• effective water catchment management</li> <li>• avoidance of direct pollution and measures to reduce diffuse pollution</li> <li>• farm waste minimisation and recycling</li> </ul>	Work with Severn Rivers Trust to deliver 2 schemes to improve water quality in the Teme Catchment	PE
FP8 Maintain and develop the skills required to manage the landscape and its special qualities.	Provide training in traditional orchard management skills for x volunteers as part of TCTOP	
<b>Living and Working</b>		
LWP1 Support the production of community-led plans, strategies and statements (such as Neighbourhood Development Plans) that satisfy the requirements of Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000, and encourage and maintain the vitality and diversity of rural community life.	Work with at least two Parish Councils to develop/complete Neighbourhood Development Plans in the AONB.	PE & DA
LWP2 Support community initiatives that promote the management of key habitats, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, recycling and community transport.	Work with Parish Council and members of the local community to identify habitat enhancements (see BP4 above) with a focus on management of the 'village green'.	PE/DA/KH
LWP3 Seek new, inventive and sensitive solutions to the retention of local shops and provision of viable local services, for example, through the integration of local service delivery and through the delivery of universal high-speed broadband.		
LWP4 Support the provision of a variety of housing that is appropriate	Ensure that, if necessary, the AONB helps to play its part in	PE

to the character of the area and meets local community needs.	meeting local housing need.	
<b>Built Development</b>		
BDP1 Development in the AONB and its setting should be in accordance with approved local design and capacity studies, including the AONB Guidance on Building Design.	Promote AONB Guidance on Lighting, Building Design, Environmental Colour Assessment etc including organising bespoke training for planning authorities.	PE
BDP2 Development proposals should be informed by the need to protect or enhance key views to and from the AONB, using AONB guidance in relevant cases.	Promote the AONB views guidance and ensure that key views are recognised in relevant planning responses.	
BDP 3 Lighting schemes, particularly in the rural areas of the AONB, should be kept to a minimum and only installed where absolutely necessary. All lighting should accord with good practice in minimising light pollution.	Promote good practice guidance on lighting, in general and in relation to specific development proposals.	PE  PE
BPD 4 There should be a presumption against the loss of traditional orchards to development, or changes to other uses.		
BDP5 Equestrian development should proceed in accordance with best practice guidelines, including the AONB guidance on keeping horses in the landscape.	Promote good practice guidance on keeping horses, in general and in relation to specific development proposals  Identify and promote a good practice pilot site	PE  DA
BDP6 Appropriate scale renewable energy schemes should be encouraged where these support the management of core elements of the AONB landscape and/or where they do not negatively affect the distinctive attributes or special qualities of the AONB.	Investigate/support further development of the dog poo digester.	DA
BDP8 Support the recycling, re-use and limited extraction of small quantities of locally distinctive building materials, such as Malvern stone, where this is needed to help retain local distinctiveness in the	Continue to promote and support the Malvern Hills stone bank.	DA

built environment.		
BDP9 Maintain and promote a programme of guidance on key planning and design issues appropriate to the AONB, aimed at planning authorities, developers and other interested parties, that takes account of the special distinctiveness of the area.	Promote AONB guidance in general and in relation to specific development proposals.	
BDP10 Monitor the cumulative impact of small-scale development within the AONB and use data to inform the development or revision of relevant policy.		
<b>Tourism</b>		
TP1 Stimulate and support sustainable tourism practices in the AONB	Liaise with local tourism bodies on how best the AONB can support sustainable tourism in the area.	DA
TP2 Promote the AONB and adjoining areas as a sustainable destination in its own right.	Distribute the revised AONB visitor map and guide (as required).	
TP3 Provide a quality public realm with good access and accessibility to facilities and features that attract tourists.	Work with MHDC in the delivery of the Route to the Hills project.	DA
TP4 Ensure that the tourism sector recognises the benefits of conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB and reflects this in policy and practice.		
TP5 Develop more collaborative and joined-up working between public, private and voluntary sector tourism organisations across the AONB, enabling greater overall efficiency and use of resources.	As for TP1 above.	
TP6 Work in partnership to develop the Malverns as an area for showcasing new tourism technologies.	<i>Develop the interactive pilot map for the AONB?</i>	DA
<b>Transport and accessibility</b>		
TRP1 Highway management and design should be in accordance with the AONB Guidance on Highway	Ensure that highways works in the AONB are in accordance with the design guidance.	PE

Design.		
TRP2 Restore and maintain tranquillity in the AONB through protection and traffic mitigation and reduction measures.	Comment on individual planning applications that may see a significant or cumulative impact in traffic.	PE
TRP3 Encourage the reuse and refurbishment of appropriate highway furniture and fittings to strengthen the special character of the AONB.	Liaise with Highways Authorities as appropriate.	PE
TRP4 Promote the coordinated planning of integrated passenger transport to, from and within the AONB.		
TRP5 Introduce and maintain measures to reduce car movements in the AONB, particularly during major events and at peak times.	Comment on individual planning and development applications that may see a significant or cumulative impact in traffic.	PE
TRP6 Develop dedicated routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders within the AONB and between the AONB and surrounding areas.	Support WCC in the development of a sensitive solution to a shared use route between Malvern and the Showground	
TRP7 Develop and promote sustainable transport options to meet local accessibility requirements.		
<b>Recreation and access</b>		
RP1 Pursue appropriate opportunities to spread recreational use to those areas which can sustain it and which will benefit from it, ensuring the provision of suitable infrastructure.		
RP2 Increase the range of organised activities through which people can learn about the AONB.		
RP3 Ensure a consistent approach to the development and delivery of access through Rights of Way management and Improvement Plans		
RP4 Ensure that the rights of way network and associated	Establish an up-to-date position on use of signage across the 3	



infrastructure (signs, gates, etc) do not detract unnecessarily from the special qualities of the landscape.	council areas in the AONB	
RP5 Promote a simple and clear message to recreational users about access rights and responsibilities		DA
RP6 Establish a strategy and programme of action to realise the health benefits of the Malvern Hills AONB with the National Health Foundation Trusts and local surgeries.	Support two initiatives which improve health for those using the AONB	PE
<b>Information and interpretation</b>		
IP1 Develop a co-ordinated approach to information, interpretation and marketing activity to promote the special qualities of the Malvern Hills area and appropriate behaviour within it.	Assess work involved in refreshing AONB on-line information, including guidance.	
IP2 Form partnerships with the technology and science sectors to develop innovative ways of accessing and using information.	Continue to form part of the Malvern based Tourism and Technology Group	DA
IP3 Promote and provide clear and simple information on alternative transport modes to the private car for accessing the countryside		
IP4 Promote products and services that support the special qualities of the Malvern Hills		
IP5 Raise awareness of 'being in the Malvern Hills' as a special place to encourage sustainable activity		
IP6 Enhance local distinctiveness through the maintenance and restoration of appropriate signs and through sign removal where appropriate		
IP7 Develop a Malverns area education resource in conjunction with local schools and/or other interested parties.		
<b>Volunteering</b>		
VP1 Support effective voluntary	Scope the pros and cons then recruit (and if necessary train)	

activity, in all its shapes and forms, that helps deliver the AONB Management Plan.	one volunteer who can progress specific activity(ies).	
VP2 Explore the potential to develop and support a coordinated volunteer network for the whole of the AONB.		
VP3 Develop and support networks of volunteers able to assist in specialist data collection.	See BP5.	
VP4 Encourage Parish Councils to achieve high standards in working closely with voluntary and community groups and meeting local needs and aspirations.		

## **MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **20 April 2018**

## **AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW**

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### **Background**

1. Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CROW Act) created a statutory responsibility on local authorities to prepare and publish a plan that formulates their policy for the management of their AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. Section 90 requires local authorities thereafter to review adopted and published AONB plans at intervals of not more than five years. The Malvern Hills AONB management plan was published in April 2014 and must be reviewed prior to April 2019. The current plan can be viewed at: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/FinalLowResManPlan2014-19.pdf>

2. Whilst the legal duty to review the management plan falls on local authorities in the area, these bodies have once again indicated that they wish the review to be conducted through the AONB Partnership. This seems entirely appropriate given that the AONB management plan is for the area as a whole, and is intended to be of relevance to a very broad range of interest groups and stakeholders.

### **Summary**

3. The process of conducting the review is intended to involve a comprehensive assessment of the relevance, accuracy and achievements of the management plan and the drafting of new information that will steer the management of the AONB over the following five-year period (2019 – 2024). In making observations under S90(b) and (c), Natural England, as a statutory consultee, will look for evidence of such a process.

4. The basic requirement under Section 89 (10) is that:

- a review of the management plan is carried out;
- based on the outcome of this review, a decision is made on whether it is expedient to amend the plan;
- such amendments as are considered appropriate should be made; and
- a report should be published on the review, specifying the amendments that have been made.

5. In practice, the AONB Partnership may find that the amendments arising from the review are so significant that they will find it more expedient to re-draft and re-issue the Plan and thus publish something more ambitious and extensive than just the 'report on the review specifying any amendments' required under S89(10)(c). A revised plan that is re-launched with appropriate publicity may also be more likely to elicit partner and stakeholder support, 'ownership' and action than a review report that accompanies the old plan. Such an approach would be consistent with the

requirements of the Act, as it would exceed the basic requirement. Since 2000, it has been the norm for all AONB Partnerships to produce re-drafted and re-issued management plans.

## **Guidance**

6. Guidance on how to write and review AONB management plans has been prepared in the past by the erstwhile Countryside Agency (CA23 and CA221). In 2012 Defra and Natural England confirmed that this guidance is still fit for purpose. In June 2012 a tripartite grouping of Defra, Natural England and the National Association for AONBs published a non-statutory steer to AONB Partnerships in taking forward the next round of management plan reviews. No new formal guidance has been issued to AONB Partnerships with regards management plan reviews since 2012 and so the guidance issued at that time still applies. Some of its key points can be summarised as follows:

- The bedrock of the plan should be the purpose of AONB designation in the context of an individual AONB's special qualities. It is accepted that the purpose of designation needs to be seen in a wider sustainable development context.
- Individual AONB Partnerships should decide on the extent of the review required. A 'light touch' approach may be taken by some whilst others may decide a comprehensive review is needed and justified.
- It is critical that reviews do not become an activity which take up a disproportionate amount of time and resources.
- The context to AONB management plans has changed to some extent and this needs to be identified and incorporated, e.g. the Natural Environment White Paper.
- The participation of a wide range of agencies, bodies and local communities is needed to shape and agree the management plan.
- Evidence and principles contained in the management plans may be reflected in local authority development plans.
- AONB bodies should screen their revised or amended management plan to evaluate whether the individual or cumulative effect of the changes being proposed is likely to be significant. This will determine whether revised plans need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

## **Recognising new challenges and directions**

7. Whilst no new management plan guidance has been issued by Government, in June 2017 Steve Preston Associates and the National Association for AONBs issued a useful document entitled 'AONB Management Plans: Support for their revision in England'. This document highlights significant changes in policy, legislation, issues and drivers over the past 5 years which may have a bearing on how AONBs are managed. And change continues to come.

8. It is clear that the future (in the short term at least) is characterised by great uncertainty, primarily but by no means exclusively arising from Brexit. For example, at the time of writing the Government is consulting on a review of the National Planning Policy Framework and on proposals for future agricultural policy (see

Appendix 1 for information). Both could have profound and lasting consequences for the future of AONBs.

9. Undertaking an AONB management plan review exercise and preparing a new plan which is effective and meaningful over a five year period is always a challenge. In the face of the scale of forthcoming change the task looks rather more difficult. However, whilst certainty is in short supply it should be possible to pick up on and respond to certain directions of travel/strategic priorities. The Government's recently published 25 year Environment Plan helps to identify targets including:

- Natural Capital – a move towards better understanding and valuing the many different benefits which the natural world provides for us (see AONB scoping report as discussed by the JAC on Friday 17 November 2017: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Malvern-Hills-AONB-Natural-Capital-Scoping-Study-2017.pdf>)
- Achieving clean and plentiful water, including reducing damaging abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater.
- Delivering a growing and resilient network of land and water that is richer in plants and wildlife, including restoring protected sites to favourable condition and creating or restoring wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network.
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently, for example, through increasing productivity, improving soil management and ensuring that food is produced sustainably and profitably.
- Conserving and enhancing beauty, for example, by ensuring that high quality, natural spaces are available to benefit peoples' health and wellbeing and by increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society.
- Mitigating climate change whilst adapting to reduce its impact.
- Managing and reducing the impact of existing plant and animal diseases, lowering the risk of new ones and tackling invasive non-native species.

10. In addition to the above, Defra has asked that consideration be given to whether AONB Management Plans (and National Park Plans) could provide a framework for directing a new generation of agri-environment support in these areas after our withdrawal from the European Union. At this stage no one knows what the detailed content, structure or delivery mechanisms for such support schemes may be and it is likely that a range of pilots carried out both inside and outside of designated areas will take a number of years to complete. However, consideration during the review process of how the AONB Management Plan could be steered to respond to this sort of challenge may be prudent.

## **Approach and Timetable**

11. An indicative programme for the management plan review is outlined in Appendix 2 and work is already underway. A webpage for this work has been created on the AONB website at: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/managing-the-aonb/management-plan-review-2018/>. The review will involve a number of different stages, including detailed consultation with local authority officers, landowners and practitioners in other partner bodies. However, at this stage it seems appropriate for the JAC to spend some time considering the current management plan and the

issues and challenges which a plan should address in the period 2019-2024. To help with this task please see:

Appendix 3 which contains a summary of the special characteristics of the area, as described in the current management plan.

The paper 'AONB Budget and Work Programme 2018/19' (appendix 3) for a list of the policies contained in the current management plan.

Appendix 4 for a series of questions which could be used to help structure the committee's discussions.

12. Members may recall that a paper entitled 'Mid-term review of the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-19) was considered by the JAC at its meeting on 7 April 2017. This mid-term review focussed on progress with delivery rather than the structure and content of the plan. However, the results of that work will be factored into the larger review exercise which is now in front of us. The mid-term review work can be found at: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Malvern-Hills-Management-Plan-Mid-Term-Final-Report.pdf>.

### **State of the AONB monitoring**

13. Members of the JAC are reminded that each revised/new management plan is published in conjunction with a sister publication called a 'State of the AONB' report. The purpose of this sister publication is to summarise the condition of the Malvern Hills AONB through reference to a range of indicators. In so doing it provides an indication of the effectiveness of the Partnership and of the previous management plan in conserving and enhancing the area.

14. The most recent State of the AONB report can be found at:

<http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2014stateofaonbpdfforwebsite.pdf>

Members have previously received presentations on the AONB Partnership's condition monitoring work, most recently in April 2017 when Professor Nick Evans from the University of Worcester presented on a report covering 10 years of landscape change in the AONB, see <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MHAONB-10-yrs-Final.pdf>

15. In response to previous discussions within the JAC a move to collect the data for the 2019 State of the AONB report has begun earlier than usual, and is now in train. This should help to ensure that the review of the management plan can be better informed by up-to-date knowledge of the condition of the area. Recently collected data such as that used to inform the 10 years of landscape change data will also be used to inform the review process.

### **Recommendation**

#### **1. The Committee is recommended to:**

##### **a) Note and comment on the contents of the paper, and**

- b) **Contribute to the review process by debating key issues, including those raised in Appendix 4.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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## **1. Introduction**

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is inviting views on the Government’s proposals for future agricultural policy stating that “*leaving the European Union and the Common Agricultural Policy will give us the chance for reform.*”

The consultation closes at 11:45pm on 8 May 2018.

The consultation paper and the supporting documents can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment>

The Government is requesting views on the policy ideas set out in the consultation 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.*”

## **2. Leaving the Common Agricultural Policy**

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.

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.

## **3. The Government’s ambition for farming and the environment**

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.

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.

## **4. An ‘agricultural transition’**

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.

## **5. The proposals for England**

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"*.

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.

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.

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.

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. A new environmental land management system**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

## **7. Animal welfare**

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

## **8. Plant and animal health**

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.

## **9. Smarter regulation and enforcement**

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.

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.

## **10. Managing risk and volatility**

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.

## **11. Helping rural communities prosper**

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.

## **12. International trade**

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.

### **13. A skilled workforce**

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.

### **14. A new statutory framework**

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.

## Appendix 2 - Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-19)

### Indicative Review Programme and Timetable

Task No.	Task	Who	Timetable
<b>Formalities and Notification</b>			
1.	Authorisation from local authorities to undertake review on their behalf	AONB Unit	Dec 2017 – Jan 2018
2.	Notify Natural England S90 (1)	AONB Unit	Jan 2018
3.	Announce requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	AONB Unit	Jan 2018
4.	Agree process and timetable of review	Steering Group	Jan 2018
<b>Scoping and Review</b>			
5.	Consider strengths and weaknesses of current Plan and new strategic priorities	AONB Unit	Jan 2018
6.	Flesh out consultation programme including suggestion of new elements	AONB Unit and External Support	Feb 2018
7.	Design questions for online survey and other elements and launch survey	External support	Feb-Mar 2018
8.	Review the current management plan in the context of best practice in management plan structure and content	External support	Feb-Mar 2018
9.	Review and assess new evidence, policies, strategies, plans, issues which are of relevance	External support	Feb-Mar 2018
10.	Collate local views on issues from existing sources	External support	Feb-Mar 2018
11.	Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) workshop on current Plan, policies, evidence, positions and new priorities	JAC	April 2018
12.	Workshop(s) on current Plan, policies, evidence, positions and new priorities	Range of partners	April-May 2018
13.	Consider whether SEA or Sustainability Appraisal is preferred/required. Write scoping report, setting context and objectives, establishing baseline evidence and indicators (Stage A)	External support	April-May 2018
14.	Assess individual sections of plan and propose main areas for revisions and structure (S89(10a)0	External support AONB Unit/Partnership	May-June 2018

15.	Draft new wording for revised Plan	AONB Unit/External support	Summer 2018
16.	Consult on scoping report for SEA	With statutory agencies	Summer 2018
17.	Undertake additional targeted consultations/participatory workshops with relevant groups and/or public (if necessary)	AONB Unit	Summer 2018
18.	Assess effects of objectives, policies and actions for SEA/ SA and develop alternatives (Stage B). Element of independent review required.	External support	Summer 2018
19.	Prepare Environmental report for SEA/SA (Stage C) and non-technical summary	External support	Summer 2018
20.	Approve format and content of new Management Plan for public consultation	Steering Group	Late Summer 2018
<b>Consultation and Approval of Full Plan</b>			
21.	Public consultation on new draft plan and SEA report (Stage D)	AONB Unit	September 2018
22.	Consider comments from consultation and amend plan	External support/AONB Unit	Nov 2018
23.	Report on consultation and suggested amendments	External support/AONB Unit	Nov 2018
24.	Draft plan to JAC for approval	AONB Unit	Nov 2018
25.	Send draft plan to Natural England for formal observations	AONB Unit	Nov 2018
26.	Consider comments from formal observations and amend Plan	AONB Unit	Dec 2018 – Jan 2019
27.	Get new plan formally approved by Local Authorities and JAC Chair	Local Authorities	Jan-Feb 2019
28.	Design, printing and distribution	AONB Unit	Feb-Mar 2019
29.	Send approved plan to Secretary of State	AONB Unit	Mar 2019
30.	Publish statement of how SEA taken into account and changes	AONB Unit	Mar 2019

### **Appendix 3 - A summary of the special qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB (from the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019)**

- The Malvern Hills: a high, dramatic ridge that is visible from the Severn Vale and from the rolling hills and valleys to the west.
- A distinctive and varied geology, with a variety of different rock types including granites, diorites, volcanic lavas, limestones, sandstones, mudstones and shales. This gives rise to a unique array of landscapes and natural habitats.
- A wide variety of landscape types in a relatively small area. Assessments of the area's landscape character identify ten distinct landscape types. Woodland and grassland in varying mixes are the most prevalent.
- A distinctive combination of landscape elements that include orchards, parklands, ridgelines, ponds, quarries, hedgerows and watercourses.
- A wide variety of wildlife habitats and species, many of which are nationally rare.
- A large number of sites that have been designated for their special characteristics. These include 15 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), one Local Nature Reserve and many other special and key geological and wildlife sites.
- An historic landscape of ancient unenclosed commons, varied field boundary patterns and designed parks and gardens.
- A rich and distinctive historic environment including Bronze Age burial grounds, Iron Age hill forts, moated sites and industrial architecture.
- Distinctive villagescapes, including conservation areas, listed buildings and local features that define a 'spirit of place' in the settlements.
- Thriving and active communities with a low deprivation index that reflects the area's prosperity and the availability of employment.
- A history of recreation and tourism that continues today, with people coming to enjoy the hills, spas and the tranquillity of the rural landscapes.
- Open access in many places over the hills and commons, providing opportunities for bracing walks with fine views.

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## **Appendix 4 – Some key questions for the JAC to consider in debating the current AONB Management Plan**

### **Part 1 - Process of management plan implementation**

1. Has the current management plan been accepted and used by the organisation or group you represent? If yes, how? If not, why not?
2. Which elements of the plan have worked and which have not? What are the issues?
3. In what ways (if any) is the current management plan making a real difference? If it is not, why not?
4. Is the current 'light touch' approach to action planning and monitoring the work of partners the correct one? What are the issues, e.g. lack of return of information from some partner bodies.
5. Is the current approach to monitoring the condition of the AONB the right one? If not, why not? What are the issues?
6. What are the key considerations that should be looked at when reviewing the AONB management plan?

### **Part 2 - Content of AONB management plan**

1. Is the management plan vision still relevant (see pages 14-15, 45 and 67 of the Current management plan: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/FinalLowResManPlan2014-19.pdf>) Is it specific enough to the Malvern Hills AONB? Is it too long/too short? Is it achievable in the next 20 years /can we work towards it? Is it sufficiently robust and aspirational?
2. Does the management plan make sufficient links to other plans and strategies affecting the area?
3. Is the broad structure of the management plan (with chapters based on different themes) still appropriate or could this be improved on?
4. How has the AONB changed in the last 4-5 years? What are the current issues affecting the area and likely to affect the area in the future? How should these changes/issues be reflected in the next management plan?
5. Have there been any recent political (policy), financial or strategic developments that are relevant to the AONB and that should be reflected in the management plan review?
6. Are the key aims and policies of the current management plan still relevant? If not, why not and how should they be changed?
7. Can you think of at least one high-level action that should be implemented in the AONB over the next 5 years and that the organisation/group you represent would be likely to help implement?

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## MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### 20 April 2018

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2018/18 – UPDATE REPORT

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### Background

1. The table below shows the Sustainable Development Fund's grants for the financial year 2017/18. The budget was £26,000, giving an overspend of £89.66, which will be absorbed by reducing the admin fee.

### Summary

No	Project Title	£
143	Bromesberrow Estate: Biodiversity Improvements ( hedging, thinning, fencing)	5,100.00
144	Car Club: Birchwood Car	1,000.00
145	Birtsmorton, Coombegreen and Hollybush Archive	1,355.00
148	Malvern NCT's tent for baby feeding & changing at events	1,202.97
149	Geosites Maintenance	1,528.00
150	Craft workshops on recycling rubbish	1,699.00
151	Welland Phone Box Info Centre	1,307.99
152	Orchard Mental Health exercises	300.00
154	C17 Enclosure Leaflet & App	1,700.75
155	Herbalist Foraging and Concoction Courses	1,000.31
160	Malvern Hills Recreation Map and Guide	500.00
166	Tank Quarry Geological Interpretation	1,052.60
167	Crayfish Extermination in the Suckley Brook	1,316.45
168	Colwall School Forest School supplies	720.00
169	Malvern Link Station Pond	293.64
170	Dog poo bags + Labels	36.00
159	Mathon Ct Harcourt Rd woodland work	1,500.00
174	Eastnor Home Farm Paddock Orchard	1,500.00
175	Foraging Hedge at Cube & Chase School Orchard	410.16
	SDF Plaques	195.00
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>23,717.87</b>
	<b>admin at 10% of total</b>	<b>2,371.79</b>
	<b>Total + admin</b>	<b>26,089.66</b>
	<b>SDF Budget</b>	<b>26,000.00</b>

## **Recommendation**

1. **The Committee is requested to:**
  - a) **Note and comment on the report,**
  - b) **Contact David Armitage with any projects that might be suitable for this fund, and**
  - c) **Consider whether our local authorities should make more inquiries of this fund.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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**MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**20 April 2018****INFORMATION ITEMS**

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**Management Plan ref.  
(abridged)**

**LP2 Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.**

**BP5 Undertake survey and research to provide decision-makers with accurate and appropriate data.**

**BP3 – Enhance the wildlife value of the countryside and achieve greater connectivity between key habitats within the AONB and between the AONB and the**

**Project**Landscape Improvement Grants

These small grants are aimed at encouraging small landowners, or those outside other grant scheme to do environmental good. Five grants were provided for hedge planting, tree planting, and pond restructuring that amounted to a total of c.£4,485.

Route to the Hills

The AONB Unit sits on the board and has also been actively involved in the project management group of this £482,000 project run by Malvern Hills District Council. It aims to provide a route from Gt Malvern Station to Rose Bank Gardens in Malvern and thus onto the hills. Along the route there will be various installations to tell of the glories of Malvern. For more details, see <http://www.routetothehills.co.uk/>

Malvern's Commons – keeping them grazed

The past experience of the Unit on securing grazing for the commons at Castlemorton has been lent on, in the current efforts. Much of this has involved visiting other commons, where successful schemes have been implemented, to gather evidence.

Finding Rare Species in the Malverns

This project - which involves working with volunteers and landowners in the north of the AONB to help collect data on some of our rarest and most iconic species - is progressing well. A small launch event in February 2018 was attended by over 30 local people and led to the surfacing of new species records and offers of land for survey. Two workshops for local volunteers on Lesser Spotted Woodpecker have recently been completed.

Highways Verges Management Pilot Project.

Funding to this project has been bolstered following an application to Natural Networks (a new grants project funded by the European Structural Investment Fund and managed by Worcestershire County Council). Tender documents have been drafted and an invitation to tender for additional management of the verges over the next three years will soon be issued. Sites to deposit grass arisings following cut

## **countryside beyond**

**FP1 – Encourage the take-up of grant options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB.**

**BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in planning policy and guidance and in decision-making.**

**HP1 Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment of the AONB.**

and collect operations in the area have been identified and one area has been prepared.

### Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The AONB Unit was successful in its bid to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for an area of land west of the Malvern Hills. The Facilitation Fund is a government supported fund to help people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. A group agreement has now been signed and activities will commence from 1 April 2018 for a period of 3 years.

Two new guidance notes to inform development in the AONB have been drafted. The first deals with external lighting and the second identifies key principles to consider when new development is visible in views. These guidance documents will be subject to consultation in April or May.

### Light from Dog Poo: catching the world's ear

With help from the Sustainable Development Fund, a local Malvern company has developed a biodigester to turn dog poo into methane that will light a gas lamp. The story was released to the Guardian newspaper over Christmas, and it caught the ear of the world. Calls came into the AONB unit from all around the world for about a month. The company is now gearing up to take advantage of this unexpected publicity.

## **Recommendation**

**Members of the JAC are requested to note this information report and contact the AONB Unit if they wish to be involved in any consultations or to receive further information on any of these agenda items.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Point

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

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