

# Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

1 May 2015

## 5. AONB BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

### Background

1. A grant application to support the core work of the AONB Partnership in 2015/16 was considered by members of the Steering Group before being submitted to Defra in January 2015. Defra has now issued a grant offer letter. 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. Budget figures from previous years are provided for comparison. The main points to note are as follows.
3. **Budget:** The total budget for 2015/16 is expected to be £179,039. This is the same overall budget figure as for 2014/15. In the current economic climate this 'hold-the-line position' is very positive, and should be seen as a signal from core partners that the work of AONB Partnerships is valued. NB Defra has reduced its contributions to National Park Authorities by c. 2% over the same period.
4. Of the total, £155,039 can be identified as 'core' funding with £24,000 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 £139,384). Local authorities in the area are expected to provide the match funding to core costs (a total of £39,655).
5. **Voluntary contributions:** 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 very small number of Councils and, following some success, a small number of additional Councils were contacted. Appendix 2 summarises contributions received in 2014/15 and those which are known thus far for 2015/16. Whilst some individual contributions may be small they can add up to very decent totals which is of considerable benefit when

added to the overall budget for delivering the Partnership's work programme. Parish financial contributions can be seen as a tangible expression of how local councils value the work of the AONB Partnership.

6. **Work priorities:** As ever, the Unit's work programme for 2015/16 continues to be centred around the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.
7. **Project funding:** Outwith Core and SDF it is expected that c. £100,000 will be spent on the Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project during 2015.

## **Recommendation**

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1) **Note the budget for 2015/16;**
- 2) **Comment on the overall direction and work priorities for the year ahead.**

## Appendix 1 –Budget for Malvern Hills AONB Partnership in 2015/16

Element	Budget					
	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Staff (costs inc. salary, NI, super, training, travel, NI etc)</b>						
AONB Manager	£51,910	£50,400	£50,500	£49,780	£49,560	£48,510
AONB Assistant Manager	£39,300	£38,220	£38,320	£37,770	£37,600	£37,690
AONB Technical Support Officer	£15,570	£15,160	£14,960	£15,488	£15,486	£25,670
Strategy Officer	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£9,928
Project Officer		£3,669				
<i>Sub total</i>	<i>£114,780</i>	<i>£115,449</i>	<i>£111,780</i>	<i>£111,038</i>	<i>£110,646</i>	<i>£121,798</i>
<b>Accommodation/office equipment</b>	£8,742	£8,242	£8,242	£8,242	£8,242	£10,000
<b>Partnership budget for PR, events etc.</b>						
NAAONB membership	£2,500					
Annual review	£900					
Small grants scheme for landscape and biodiversity improvements	£3,000					
Landscape scale project development	£3,500					
External advice	£3,000					
Neighbourhood Planning	£3,000					
Large projects	£4,380					
Communications	£2,000					
<i>Sub total</i>	<i>£22,280</i>	<i>£22,111</i>	<i>£27,236</i>	<i>£27,300</i>	<i>£31,887</i>	<i>£29,941</i>
<b>Partnership running costs (Council support, IT, personnel, finance etc.)</b>	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237
<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b>	£24,000	£24,000	£34,807	£45,140	£50,089	£63,539
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b><u>£179,039</u></b>	<b><u>£179,039</u></b>	<b><u>£191,302</u></b>	<b><u>£200,957</u></b>	<b><u>£210,101</u></b>	<b><u>£234,515</u></b>

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

<b>Parish/Town Council</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	
	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Colwall		£1,000
Cradley		£100
Ledbury		£350
Malvern Wells	£800	£800
Welland		
West Malvern	£300	£300
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2,550</b>

### Appendix 3 – Unit Work Programme for 2015/16

Management Plan Policy	Task
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.
LP2 Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.	Work with the Three Counties Agricultural Society to enhance 3 landscape elements at the showground  Ensure that proposals for biodiversity enhancements under BP3 are landscape 'proofed'.
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.
LP3 Identify and promote opportunities for positive landscape change to landowners, managers, government and all those with an influence over land.	Promote AONB guidance to all interested parties.  Work with MHC to research options for securing long-term management of the Commons by grazing
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.	Work with Welland Parish Council to develop ideas for local landscape enhancements using S106 monies.
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.	Input to County Waste and Minerals Plans to ensure that the quest for sustainability does not adversely impact on landscape character.
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)
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 1 of the TCTOP.

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	Explore a bid for funding to purchase fruit trees for planting within the TCTOP.
BP2 Restore the condition of degraded habitats in line with local and national biodiversity priorities.	X traditional orchards managed within TCTOP
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.	Implement x improvements as part of the 'landscape scale' biodiversity project East of the Malvern Hills project Explore the creation of a new landscape scale project area in the north of the AONB.
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)
BP5 Undertake survey and research to provide decision-makers with accurate and appropriate data.	Collect new data to inform a landscape scale proposal for the north of the AONB
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.
HP2 Identify and improve the evidence base of locally important heritage assets of the AONB in order to understand better the significance and condition of the historic environment, which will underpin future policy.	Support communities in the AONB to submit proposals for listing of locally important heritage assets (in Worcestershire part of 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
FP1 Encourage the take-up of grant options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB.	Work with NE and others to ensure that new CS grants benefit x owners in the AONB.
FP2 Bring woodlands, orchards and other characteristic habitats into favourable conservation condition	Liaise with owners of PAWS woodlands and work with the WT PAWS Officer to develop

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through management regimes that provide an economic return; for example, through the production of timber, wood fuel and other sustainable uses.	restoration plans for 2 AONB woodlands. X orchards managed through the TCTOP. Support a biomass study which benefits the AONB
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
FP7 Identify and promote good agricultural practices that encourage: <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 WWT and EA to deliver improvements in land (and water) management, with a focus on the Teme Catchment
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
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 Neighbourhood Development Plans in the AONB.  Work with Colwall PC to complete its NDP.
LWP2 Support community initiatives that promote the management of key habitats, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, recycling and community transport.	Work with Welland Parish Council and members of the local community to identify habitat enhancements (see BP4 above)
LWP4 Support the provision of a variety of housing that is appropriate to the character of the area and meets local community needs.	Ensure that, if necessary, the AONB helps to play its part in meeting local housing need.
BDP1 Development in the AONB and its setting should be in accordance with approved local	Promote AONB Guidance on Building Design, including organising bespoke

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design and capacity studies, including the AONB Guidance on Building Design.	training for planning authorities.
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.  Work with Herefordshire Council and other local partners to achieve a more environmentally friendly solution to street lighting in the AONB.
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  Finalise and promote good practice pilot site
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 built environment.	Develop proposals and work with industry and local authorities to implement them (NB lease on Brockhill Farm up this year)
TP1 Stimulate and support sustainable tourism practices in the AONB	Find three new AONB businesses to include within the 'Our Land' offer
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.
TP6 Work in partnership to develop the Malverns as an area for showcasing new tourism technologies.	Develop the interactive pilot map for the AONB.
TRP1 Highway management and design should be in accordance with the AONB Guidance on Highway Design.	Ensure that highways works in the AONB are in accordance with the design guidance.

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TRP6 Develop dedicated routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders within the AONB and between the AONB and surrounding areas.	Progress thinking on a cycle route between Peachfield Road and the 3 Counties Showground.
RP4 Ensure that the rights of way network and associated infrastructure (signs, gates, etc) do not detract unnecessarily from the special qualities of the landscape.	Establish an up-to-date position on use of signage across the 3 council areas in the AONB
RP5 Promote a simple and clear message to recreational users about access rights and responsibilities	Cycle leaflet?
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.	Make contact with local health and well-being boards relevant to the AONB
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