

MALVERN HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26 APRIL 2024

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Recommendation

1. The Committee is recommended to:

- a) **Note the budget for 2024/25; and**
- b) **Comment on the overall direction and work priorities for the year ahead.**

Summary

2. A summary of the draft 'core'¹ budget for the year is provided in Appendix 1. Budget figures from the previous year are provided in brackets for comparison.

Core budget

3. The total core budget (not including voluntary contributions from Parish Councils) for 2024/25 is expected to be £217,620 (£215,594), this is slightly increased from 2023/24 reflecting some small increases in grant from local authorities.

4. Central government (Defra) is expected to provide a total of £173,490 (£173,490). Local authorities in the area are expected to provide £44,130 (£42,104) of match funding to core costs in the following proportions:

Herefordshire Council - £16,334 (£16,334)
Worcestershire County Council - £14,594 (£13,268)
Malvern Hills District Council - £11,550 (£11,000)
Forest of Dean District Council - £959 (£959)
Gloucestershire County Council - £693 (£630)

¹ The core budget covers salary, accommodation and partnership running costs together with a small amount of disposable income to cover any consultant fees, community grants etc

Voluntary contributions

6. 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 National Landscape Partnership. An initial request was made to a small number of Councils and, following some success, additional Councils were contacted. Appendix 2 summarises contributions received since 2017/18. 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 National Landscape Partnership.

Staff

7. A part time Planning Officer commenced work on 1 February 2023. David Armitage and Karen Humphries share the post of Partnership Assistant Manager working for a combined 6 days a week. The Partnership Support Officer post has been vacant since 2020 but help with financial transactions etc is provided by the Worcestershire County Council Greenspace team. A Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer (Sash Warden) delivers the FiPL programme – see point 9.

Work priorities

8. The Unit's work programme for 2024/25 will be centred around the implementation of the AONB Management Plan but is also expected to be driven, significantly, by more recent drivers and initiatives. Key priorities for the year include:

- Reviewing the AONB Management Plan.
- Exploring the development of a form of Climate Change Adaptation Plan, for incorporation within the next management plan.
- Delivering the final year of Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme, including the Historic Building Restoration Grant.
- Delivering a range of Access for All improvements, utilising funding from Defra.
- Advice and support to landowners via the landowners' group, the Pasture4Life programme and one-one provision.
- Work to increase participation amongst different audiences, including making use of new funding to support youth engagement through day and residential programmes.
- More work on helping people to make an emotional connection with the NL, including exploring a National Lottery funded project for the area and participating in the national 'Nature Calling' project.
- Participation in the South Worcestershire Development Plan review Examination in Public and the Herefordshire Local Plan review.
- Training to Local Planning Authority Officers and Committees.
- More work on helping partners to meet carbon zero targets.

Additional/Project funding

9. There are 3 additional pots of funding that Defra is expected to provide this year, as follows:

Project/programme	Amount	Comments
FiPL	£361,213	Fourth and final year. Includes the FiPL Officer costs.
Access for All	£54,738	To improve access to the countryside
Capital grant	£77,101	

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Appendix 1 –Indicative budget for Malvern Hills AONB Partnership in 2024/25

Element	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Staff (costs inc. salary, NI, super, training, travel, NI, backfunding pensions etc)								
AONB Manager	£63,000	£65,495	£63,495	£58,941	£58,941	£57,399	£52,160	£52,410
AONB Assistant Manager	£56,000	£58,105	£64,225	£54,000	£44,518	£43,500	£39,510	£39,600
AONB Support Officer/Team Support (WCC)	£5,000	£5,000	£5,229	£0	£18,949	£18,202	£15,650	£15,770
AONB Planning Officer	£28,500	£25,000	£4,537					
Strategy Officer/Planning Advice				£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£7,000
Landowner support	£10,000		£3,965					
Sub total	£162,500	153,600	£141,452	£121,941	£130,408	£127,101	£115,320	£114,780
Accommodation/ office equipment	£10,000	£10,000	£10,851	£9,072	£9,072	£9,072	£9,072	£8,742
Partnership budget for PR, events etc.								
NAAONB membership	£2,900	£2,700	£2,789	£3,000	£3,000	£2,575	£2,575	£2,400
Annual review	£400	£400	£340	£400	£400	£358	£400	£400
Small grants scheme for landscape and biodiversity improvements	£5,000	£5,000	£8,790	£10,000	£10,000	£4,000	£3,000	£3,600
Landscape scale project development	£2,583	£3,000	£2,840	£4,580	£4,580	£4,580	£3,000	£3,500
External advice	£7,000	£5,327	£15,722	£7,967	£3,500	£3,500	£1,500	
State of AONB report		£10,000					£5,000	
Management Plan review	£8,000						£9,000	
Large projects		£5,000	£7,304	£8,000	£10,000	£5,000	£5,000	£6,980
Communications	£2,000	£2,000	£9,632	£7,000	£5,000	£3,000	£2,000	£2,000
Sub total	£27,883	£33,427	£47,417	£40,947	£32,480	£23,013	£31,475	£24,880
Partnership running costs (Council support, IT, personnel, finance etc.)	£9,237	£9,237	£9,327	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237

Community Projects (prev Sustainable Development Fund)	£8,000	£9,300	£10,869	£12,190	£12,190	£22,875	£22,872	£25,991
<u>Total Budget</u>	<u>£217,620</u>	<u>£215,594</u> ²	<u>£219,826</u>	<u>£193,387</u>	<u>£193,387</u>	<u>£191,298</u>	<u>£187,976</u>	<u>£183,875</u>

Appendix 2 – Voluntary contributions from Parish/Town Councils

Organisation	Contribution				
	2023/24	2022/23	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Colwall PC	£1,500	£2,500	£1,500	£1,500	£750
Cradley PC	?	£100		£100	£100
Ledbury TC	£500			£500	£500
Malvern Wells PC	£1,000 ?	£1,000	£1,000	£760	£1,600
Little Malvern & Welland PC	£300	£300	£300	£300	£250
West Malvern PC	£350	£300	£300	£300	£300
Wellington Heath PC		£125	£100	£100	
Berrow PC					£50
Total	£3,650	£4,325	£3,200	£3,560	£3,550

² Not including additional voluntary PC/TC contributions