



Agenda

Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Friday, 5 April 2019, 10.00 am

Elgar Room, Malvern Hills District Council

**Avenue Road
Malvern
WR14 3AF**

Please note change of date and venue to originally scheduled.

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Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Friday, 5 April 2019, 10.00 am,

Members

Elected Members:

Mrs G Rees (Chairman)	Malvern Hills Conservators
Dr K A Pollock (Vice Chairman)	Worcestershire County 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
Prof J W Raine	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
Mr J Hervey-Bathurst	County Land & Business Association
Ms H McDowall	Natural England
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
	Please note this meeting will now take place on 5 April 2019 In the Elgar Room at Malvern Hills District Council rather than 12 April as originally scheduled.	

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To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Kate Griffiths on 01905 846630 or email: kgriffiths@worcestershire.gov.uk

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

Date of Issue: Thursday, 21 March 2019

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Substitutes	
2	Declaration of Interests	
3	Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2018.	
4	The Malvern Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund in pictures To receive a short presentation on previous projects from David Armitage, AONB Partnership Assistant Manager.	
5	The Ecosystem Approach and Natural Capital checklist To receive a report from Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager.	1 - 14
6	An Assessment of the economic health benefits of (part of) the Malvern Hills AONB To receive a report from Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager.	15 - 18
7	AONB Budget and Work Programme 2019/20 To receive a report from Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager.	19 - 34
8	Sustainable Development Fund To receive a report from David Armitage, AONB Partnership Assistant Manager.	35 - 36
9	Information Items To note the items for information.	37 - 40
10	Verbal Reports from Partners	
11	Dates of Future Meetings - Friday 8 November 2019.	
	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 5 APRIL 2019

THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH AND NATURAL CAPITAL CHECKLIST - DELIVERING MORE FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PEOPLE IN THE MALVERN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Recommendation

1. **The Committee is recommended to:**
 - a) **Note the Government's expectations with regard Natural Capital and the work of AONB Partnerships;**
 - b) **Consider the contents of the checklist completed in draft at Appendix A.**
 - c) **Consider how the organisations they represent, as key members of the AONB Partnership, can best be engaged to participate in and contribute to this process.**

Background

2. Natural Capital can be defined as the stock or elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people.¹ Ecosystem Services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as food, timber, aesthetic and recreational opportunities including related health benefits, climate, water quality and flood regulation.

3. The Government's 25-year Environment Plan – **A Green Future: our 25 year plan to improve the environment** – has Natural Capital at its core. The plan takes a broad view, encompassing the range of overlapping socio-economic and environmental assets and opportunities. It is also a framework plan, providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to get involved in its ongoing refinement, development and implementation.

4. AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities are seen as key deliverers of the 25-year plan and there has been encouragement for them to consider how they can be more proactive in delivering more for both people and wildlife. Some AONBs have taken a first step by producing Natural Capital scoping studies to generate an initial picture of the Natural Capital in their areas and how people benefit from it (the Malvern Hills AONB Natural Capital Scoping Study was produced in December 2017). However, few have embedded a Natural Capital approach in their work or their planning.

¹ Costanza 2008

5. As part of Government's encouragement to help protected landscape bodies to work towards adopting a Natural Capital approach to their work some consultancy support has been made available in recent months. Specifically, (and following a successful pilot with National Park Authorities) a company called Bowfell Consulting has been contracted by Natural England to support 12 AONB Partnerships/Conservation Boards to embed the Ecosystem Approach in their management planning and decision-making. The Malvern Hills AONB is one of those 12 AONB partnerships.

6. A member of staff from the Malvern Hills AONB Unit attended an initial workshop on this topic in London in November 2018. Since then, the Unit has been reviewing its work by answering a series of 6 questions – the Ecosystem Approach and Natural Capital Checklist. This checklist is designed to help AONB partnerships consider the range of Natural Capital within their areas, how they plan to improve it and how they interact and communicate with AONB partners and local communities. Since January 2019 Paul Esrich and Karen Humphries in the AONB Unit have been supported by Bowfell Consulting in considering these questions.

Summary

7. The aim of the checklist is to review current practice with regards to Natural Capital planning. Following its completion an action plan will be produced which ensures that Natural Capital is at the heart of the AONB's work – both present and future.

8. As a result of the checklist work it is expected that AONB Partnerships will:

- Understand how much they know about the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services in their landscapes – and what the key knowledge gaps are, both in terms of data and qualitative experiences.
- Link actions to improve and expand biodiversity with the benefits this can provide for people – within and beyond the AONB – eventually working through a comprehensive action plan.
- Review the effectiveness of their Management Plans, Action Plans and Partnerships, making sure that partners have a shared vision for Natural Capital management and are working together to achieve this.
- Understand how to communicate these ideas to all their stakeholders and encourage their involvement – putting people at the heart of their work.

What happens next?

9. The Ecosystem Approach and Natural Capital checklist completed by the AONB Unit can be found in draft at Appendix A.

10. The results from the 12 AONB Partnerships supported to take these first steps in using the checklist and embedding the Natural Capital approach will be scrutinised by Natural England with a view to providing further support and encouragement. It is expected that the work of AONB Partnerships and the reports and documents they produce — Management Plans, State of the AONB reports etc. - will be shaped by this approach in the future.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Appendix A: Ecosystem Approach + Natural Capital Checklist

How is your partnership currently using the Ecosystem Approach and considering Natural Capital ?

Name of partnership: Malvern Hills AONB

Start date: 04/01/19

Completion date:

About your partnership -

- **Completed by whom? (Name and organisation): Paul Esrich & Karen Humphries, AONB Unit**
- **Which partners and other organisations were involved in undertaking this self-assessment?**
- **What is the area your partnership or project operates over (in km2)?: 105km2**
- **Proposed date for reviewing your Checklist:**

Checklist summary	Progressing towards meeting the Question				Meeting the Question	
Your assessment – of how far you are meeting each Question	No or very little evidence	Some evidence	Good progress	Near to meeting	Meeting	Exceeding
Description of progress	We have little or no evidence to demonstrate that we are underway with this criteria	We have evidence to demonstrate we are beginning to address this criteria – but we have not progressed far	We are at least half way to meeting this criteria and have identified actions planned to address the gaps	We have only one or two areas that require development and action to address these is underway	We have sufficient evidence to demonstrate we are meeting the criteria	We have met the criteria and can demonstrate good practice and/or innovative activity for this criteria
Question 1 – Is your partnership considering the range of Natural Capital* within your partnership area? Have you collated data to understand the state of your Natural Capital*? <i>* including landscapes and associated cultural heritage, see guidance for definition</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question 2 – How are you considering the ecosystem services that come from the Natural Capital in your area? Are you actively seeking to understand and value the key benefits that people need and want from ecosystem services derived from natural capital in your project area? (Remember values can be both monetary and non-monetary)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question 3 – How are you working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and local communities - including those who benefit from ecosystem services – to develop a shared delivery plan and deliver joint actions that enhance Natural Capital and the ecosystem services they provides?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question 4 - Does your management planning prioritise actions that enhance and improve the resilience of your Natural Capital* to enable it to provide multiple benefits for people? <i>* including landscapes and associated cultural heritage, see guidance for definition</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question 5 – How does your management planning address the current and future risks, pressures and long term changes (10+ years) affecting your Natural Capital, how it functions, and the multiple benefits/ecosystem services it provides for people?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question 6 - Are you using monitoring and evaluation to feedback and adjust your management planning, priorities and actions? (i.e. adaptive management)? This can include qualitative assessment and feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Question 1 – Is your partnership considering the range of Natural Capital* within your partnership area? Have you collated data to understand the state of your Natural Capital*?

** including landscapes and associated cultural heritage, see guidance for definition*

Question 1 – your final assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Summary:

Yes. In 2017 the AONB Unit commissioned the Consultancy for Environmental Economics and Policy (CEEP) to produce a Natural Capital Scoping Study for the Malvern Hills AONB. The report was published in December 2017 and is available at: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Malvern-Hills-AONB-Natural-Capital-Scoping-Study-2017.pdf>. The report summarises the Natural Capital (NC) Assets that exist in the AONB and assesses the contribution they make to different Ecosystem Services (ES) in relative terms. The NC assets assessed were as follows: Arable, Improved Grassland, Semi-improved and Neutral Grassland, BAP Priority Grassland, Woodland and Traditional Orchards. The indicative extent (in ha) of each NC asset is provided.

Other data sets include:

Information about rare species in the North of the AONB from the 'Finding rare species in the Malverns' project - ongoing

Condition data about historic houses and parks, local geology sites and footpaths collected as part of the State of the AONB survey work – 2018

Survey work relating to the Kings Third C17 ditches and banks of the North Malvern Hills

Dark sky monitoring – on going

Evidence and examples:

The Scoping Study was based on the best data available, provided both by the AONB Unit and a range of partner organisations. However, this data was incomplete and sometimes dated and as such the assessments carried out are indicative. No specific scores or values are provided but ES derived from the NC assets are graded as of high, medium or low importance to people and society. In broad terms the assessments show that:

- Arable land and improved grassland fall below the highest importance in terms of food provision because the land in the Malvern Hills AONB is only of medium productivity. These assets also score low for providing other ES when compared to other Natural Capital assets and even have a potential negative effect on water quality due to diffuse pollution issues.
- Semi-improved and neutral grassland is less productive in terms of food provision but more valuable for biodiversity and aesthetic values. These Natural Capital assets are also likely to have some positive effect on water quality regulation as opposed to their more intensively managed counterparts. Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority grasslands, dominated by lowland dry acid grassland, provide an even higher biodiversity value. They also offer a high recreational value which is due to the good accessibility of BAP priority grasslands in the AONB, particularly on the Malvern Hills and Commons.
- Woodland and traditional orchards provide the most balanced level of ecosystem service provision across all assessed Natural Capital assets. Woodlands and traditional orchards are at least of medium importance for each ecosystem service and superior to other Natural Capital assets in terms of air and climate regulation services (mitigation and adaptation).

The global climate regulation services provided by Natural Capital in the AONB (carbon stored in vegetation and topsoils) are valued at £59 million (see Section 2.2.9 of the report).

Gaps, opportunities & areas for development:

A key evidence gap which precluded more detailed assessment of NC and ES was information about the current condition, quality and management of habitats. This gap meant that indications of value in the report were sometimes based on national trends rather than local evidence. Levels of confidence in the different assessments carried out are indicated in the report. The Unit doubts whether it is feasible/affordable to generate up-to-date information about the condition, quality and management of all the main habitats across the AONB.

A secondary aim of the Scoping Study was to assess the potential for valuing Natural Capital assets in the Malvern Hills AONB in monetary terms based on available data and evidence. Out of the 54 Natural Capital asset category/ecosystem services combinations provided 23 can (almost) be fully quantified in monetary terms whilst 8 can be partially quantified. However, for some calculations additional data would need to be generated to inform a monetary assessment. The study found that it will be possible to quantify the physical health value related to 'green exercise' and it may also be possible to quantify the mental health value attached to the AONB's Natural Capital. For the other Natural Capital asset category/ecosystem services combinations, robust scientific evidence suitable for monetary quantification is lacking and it was determined that these assets cannot be monetised.

The contribution of NC to human health was not considered as part of the Scoping Study and this is an area that we would like to explore further, given the popularity of the Malvern Hills and Commons for outdoor recreation, especially amongst those who live close by. As part of a modest visitor survey which was conducted in the area in the summer of 2018 we asked a series of questions designed to enable a consultant to monetise the area's contribution to health, for example, through understanding what activities people engage in and how long they spend in the area. Dependent on costs and checking the recent survey data it is expected that a limited assessment of health benefits could be commissioned shortly.

There is a need to communicate clearly with both partners and non partners about the natural capital work and about the Ecosystem Approach, so that they are familiar with the term and are encouraged to add to data collection.

Question 2 – How are you considering the ecosystem services that come from the Natural Capital in your area? Are you actively seeking to **understand and value the key benefits that people need and want from ecosystem services** derived from natural capital in your project area? (Remember values can be both monetary and non-monetary)

Question 1 – your final assessment

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Summary:

Thus far active attempts to 'understand and value' benefits from Ecosystem Services as Ecosystem Services have been limited. Rather, the services and benefits provided by Natural Capital have tended to be considered and incorporated in the broader context of projects and initiatives which help to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Evidence and examples:

The recently completed Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) has placed people at the centre of attempts to better understand traditional orchard heritage and to conserve and enhance traditional orchards. Over 300 volunteers have been involved in the project, learning about traditional orchards and their value and place in local history whilst also getting actively involved in managing and enjoying being in orchards (cultural services). The project has also involved identifying and growing rare varieties of fruit tree which were known to be present in the area in the past and then planting these trees back into traditional orchards (genetic diversity – provisioning services).

A project in development at present concerns management of roadside verge areas to enhance their biodiversity. A better display of native wildflowers in verges will benefit pollinators (regulating services) who will then be active in surrounding areas of farmland where they will benefit crop production (provisioning services). It will contribute to peoples' enjoyment of the area (cultural services) as well as the supporting services provided by biodiversity.

Responses collected as part of a visitor survey of users of the Malvern Hills and Commons have helped us to identify what people particularly like about the area and what they use it for. This then feeds back into management. For example, people said they particularly enjoyed/valued the views and this has helped us to bolster our work to safeguard these views. The visitor survey also revealed what recreational activities people engage in, how long they spend doing these activities and how much less they would exercise if the open spaces of the hills and commons were not available. These results are now being used in a study to assess the economic health benefits derived from this area. The study values the physical and mental health benefits of the area at £5.8m per annum. The study results will be presented to a local Health and Well-being Partnership with the aim of trying to encourage more preventative health interventions in the area.

Gaps, opportunities & areas for development:

In almost all cases we would benefit from actively seeking to understand the value of Ecosystem Services at project planning stage and to document this value both prior to project start-up and on completion.

Discussions with the University of Worcester on possible collaborative working in the future may reveal opportunities for helping to measure the flow of Ecosystem Services.

Question 3 – How are you working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and local communities - including those who benefit from ecosystem services – to develop a shared delivery plan and deliver joint actions that enhance Natural Capital and the ecosystem services they provides?

Question 1 – your final assessment

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Summary:

There are many different stakeholders involved in the AONB Partnership. The (new) AONB Management Plan does not contain a detailed shared delivery or action plan, it only identifies a small number of illustrative actions. Our approach is to identify actions in annual Business Plans in the run-up to (and sometimes during) each new financial year when partner priorities and resources are better known and articulated. It is intended that initiatives and projects related to NC and ES will be identified and delivered in the same vein, either directly through the AONB Unit or via the AONB Unit dove-tailing with and supporting the work of others.

As mentioned earlier, NC and ES have become more integral to the AONB Management Plan through the recent review process.

Evidence and examples:

The AONB Unit is working with a cluster of landowners and land managers in the western part of the AONB through its Facilitation Fund. The Unit is commissioning mapping work which will identify opportunities for bigger, better, more and more joined up habitat management to benefit key wildlife species in the area. This work is expected to be crucial in landowner discussions about how to improve parkland, ancient semi-natural woodland and traditional orchards and to build resilience at a landscape scale.

The AONB Unit is working with the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre, local people and local landowners on a HLF funded project to survey rare wildlife in the northern part of the AONB. Survey work is being focused on private land which has not benefitted from survey in the past. It is expected that the results from this work will feed into discussions with landowners and managers about actions that will benefit wildlife, where appropriate supported by partners such as the AONB Unit or Natural England.

The AONB Unit has begun to work with health related partners to develop/support joint actions that will contribute to people's health and wellbeing. For example, it is using the AONB Sustainable Development Fund to support an initiative organised by Freedom Leisure aimed at encouraging more local people to access the Malvern Hills. It is also exploring a joint project with Worcestershire County Council using community transport to enable people who may not be able to easily access the AONB to access heritage. The AONB Unit has recently commissioned an economic assessment of the health and well-being benefits of the AONB. The results of this work will be presented to the Malvern Hills Health and Wellbeing Partnership which includes staff representing a wide range of health bodies. It is hoped that the study will be a spring board to greater collaborative working.

Gaps, opportunities & areas for development:

1. There is a need to be even more proactive in liaising with partners to develop NC and ES planning and actions. The Facilitation Fund is taking us closer to those who own and manage land but there is a gap in our knowledge and experience in the area of land management which needs to be filled.
2. Using AONB Management Plans to help direct NELMS would be a great driver for putting NC and ES at the heart of more integrated planning. In the meantime actions drafted for annual work plans could be NC/ES proofed.
3. Early work by Natural England to highlight climate change adaptation opportunities in the area could be developed further and incorporated within planning discussions and action planning to inform and drive change in the area.
4. The AONB Management Plan contains an illustrative action to encourage use of the Natural Capital Planning Tool in the AONB. Discussions need to take place with Local Planning Authorities to explore whether this can be piloted in the area.
5. There is a need to build stronger relationships with local communities and community groups by improving our communication about the AONB and the opportunity to work in partnership with us.
6. We need to find better ways of making our plans and strategies more accessible to a wider range of people.

Question 4 – Does your management planning prioritise actions that enhance and improve the resilience of your Natural Capital* to enable it to provide multiple benefits for people?

* including landscapes and associated cultural heritage, see guidance for definition

Question 1 – your final assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Summary:

To some extent yes, but not necessarily couched in those terms. A new management plan for the Malvern Hills AONB (2019-24) has recently been endorsed by the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and has been sent for formal sign-off by constituent local authorities. It will commence on 01/04/19. Within the introduction NC and ES are recognised as a common themes running through the plan but the document is structured along more traditional lines with chapters related to specific themes including landscape, biodiversity, historic environment etc. The focus of each chapter is its objectives and policies and implementing a number of these will deliver for NC, even if this is not specifically stated. Only a small number of illustrative actions are provided in the plan, the intention is to use the objectives and policies to drive appropriate and realistic actions with partners in each year. In the design of the management plan it may be possible to highlight areas which would specifically develop against NC.

Evidence and examples:

Paragraphs 1.20 – 1.24 of the management plan provide an introduction to NC and ES for the AONB.

Landscape Objective LO2 – Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.

Biodiversity policy BP1 – Enhance the wildlife value of the countryside and achieve greater buffering and connectivity between key habitats within the AONB and the countryside beyond.

Historic Environment Policy HP3 – Promote greater public understanding of, and engagement with, the historic environment of the AONB.

Farming and Forestry Policy FP1 – Ensure that agricultural practices include:

- Sustainable production of produce;
- Sustainable utilisation of soil, minimising erosion;
- Effective water catchment management;
- Avoidance of direct pollution and measures to reduce diffuse pollution;
- Farm waste minimisation and recycling.

Farming and Forestry Policy FP2 – Bring woodlands, orchards and other characteristic habitats into favourable conservation condition through encouraging and supporting management regimes that provide an economic return.

Farming and Forestry Policy illustrative action – Identify the natural and cultural capital and ecosystem services to be key components of future agri-environment, land management and rural development support mechanism in the AONB.

Built development illustrative action – Explore the use of the NC Planning Tool to assess development proposals for their likely impact on the AONB's NC and the ES it provides to people.

Recreation and Access Policy RP5 – Develop, support and promote programmes and projects that improve health and well-being for all, especially those that are most in need.

Recreation and Access Policy RP6 – Increase the range of opportunities for those with restricted mobility and health impairments to experience the AONB.

We are currently working on guidance for external lighting and are in the process of designating dark sky areas, both of which support our ambition of improving tranquillity.

We are about to publish views guidance which will provide advice to developers and farmers about protecting long distance views within and from the AONB.

Our work with the Facilitation Fund will provide opportunities to plan projects which improve connectivity between land holdings in the AONB.

The Malvern Hills Trust is one of our AONB partners and produced a 5 year management plan for a large part of the AONB which is actively managed by the Trust IN 2016. This includes a detailed action plan which aims to conserve and enhance both natural and cultural assets.

Gaps, opportunities & areas for development:

Whilst the management plan is felt to enhance and improve the resilience of NC there are undoubtedly opportunities to better structure the document such that NC provides a more central focus. However, this won't happen now until the new plan is reviewed. It is also felt that such a re-structuring needs to be predicated on better NC data as well as on a better understanding of the relationship between NC and Natural Beauty.

Current gaps etc include:

- a focus on catchments, although this is not easy for us since the AONB occupies just a small % of two main catchments and so there is limited opportunity in considering such work within the AONB alone;
- a more progressive look at future landscapes beyond the constraints of existing character assessments;
- a way of directing future land management schemes towards NC objectives in the AONB, though the AONB landscape strategy may provide a starting point.

Question 5 – How does your management planning address the current and future risks, pressures and long term changes (10+ years) affecting your Natural Capital, how it functions, and the multiple benefits/ecosystem services it provides for people?

Question 1 – your final assessment

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Summary:

As in the response to question 4, whilst the (new) AONB management plan recognises NC and ES as common elements the document is structured along more traditional lines with chapters related to specific themes including landscape, biodiversity, historic environment etc. Within that context current and future risks, pressures and changes are recognised as 'issues' within the plan. Objectives and policies at the end of each chapter then set out how those issues will be addressed. However, the structure of the plan in themed chapters does not necessarily lend itself well to a portrayal of the sometimes complex and multi-layered relationships which exist when considering NC and ES. In respect of timescales the AONB management plan is a 5 year document and some issues relate to that time period of time but objectives and policies should, in most cases, relate to the 20 year vision contained in the plan.

Evidence and examples:

1. The management plan recognises that new activities and developments within the AONB and its setting are adding noise, light and movement into the landscape over a period of time and that this can impact on peoples' tranquillity, sense of place etc (cultural services). A policy seeks to address these effects by ensuring that future change and development is informed by AONB guidance documents, including on lighting.
2. The management plan recognises that a decline in pollinator numbers is a significant threat to local wildlife, peoples' enjoyment of the area and the agricultural economy. Policies seek to address this by conserving, enhancing and expanding key habitats as well as by enhancing the wildlife value of the countryside and achieving greater buffering and connectivity between key habitats.
3. The management plan recognises that traditional orchards are a key habitat which are particularly susceptible to development pressures because of their proximity to settlement. They are flagged in the Natural Capital Scoping Study as delivering a variety of ES (provisioning, regulating and cultural services). A policy in the plan contains a presumption against the loss of traditional orchards or their change to other uses.

Gaps, opportunities & areas for development:

Future management planning would benefit from an articulation of how NC and ES relate to natural beauty and a clear portrayal of the interrelated nature of many aspects of NC and ES. There is overlap and some duplication of issues in the management plan but this is intentional and reflects a desire to make the document as easy to use as possible for a wide audience.

Question 6 – Are you using monitoring and evaluation to feedback and adjust your management planning, priorities and actions? (i.e. adaptive management)? This can include qualitative assessment and feedback.

Question 1 – your final assessment

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Summary:

Yes. The AONB Partnership produces a State of the AONB report every five years, see for example: <https://bit.ly/2N2pdI7>. This contains data on a core suite of indicators which provide an overview of the health of the AONB. Data for this report is collected early in the year in which the Management Plan is reviewed. This ensures that any issues or problems identified in the data collection can be highlighted and addressed through the new management. In addition, the AONB Unit carries out additional monitoring from time to time, for example on broader landscape change (<https://bit.ly/2E67Weg>) and levels of traffic use (<https://bit.ly/2WZQJe8>).

Evidence and examples:

Data collected on the condition of Local Geological Sites (LGSs) in 2014 showed that there had been a deterioration in condition (61.5%% of sites in desirable condition compared with 75.6% in 2008). To address this issue the AONB Unit and a major landowner in the area supported a group of geoconservation volunteers to develop and implement a maintenance programme for a number of these sites. In 2018 data showed that this approach had been successful, with 83.3% of LGSs now in desirable condition.

Data collected for the 2018 State of the AONB report revealed that one of the registered parks and gardens in the AONB was assessed as being in vulnerable condition as a result of fragmented ownership, lack of succession planting and the absence of a management plan. Through the AONB Facilitation Fund the AONB Unit has now contacted the landowners concerned and is working with them, and Historic England, to develop a management plan for the site.

In its report entitled '10 years of landscape change in the Malvern Hills AONB' the gradual loss of mature/veteran trees in hedgerows and fields and the absence of any recruitment of young trees was identified as a clear threat to the character of the AONB. This threat has been given greater prominence in the new AONB Management Plan and the AONB Unit has provided grants to a small number of landowners in recent years to plant new trees in hedgerows.

In recent years there has been an increase in development in the setting of the AONB, including large scale development which has had a negative impact on views from the high ground of the AONB. The new AONB Management Plan now contains a policy stating that strategic allocations of land for development should be informed by a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (LSCA) or by Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal. The AONB Unit has recently collaborated with one Local Planning Authority to commission and manage a LSCA for the setting of the AONB around Malvern. This work will form part of the evidence base for the revision of the Local Development Plan. In addition, the AONB Unit has supported the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan by Malvern Town Council which identifies key views and contains a policy protecting them.

Gaps, opportunities & areas for development:

The scale and extent of the State of the AONB monitoring work is limited by available resources. This means that we do not know about the current condition of certain features of the AONB and so cannot respond accordingly. However, prompted by Historic England we are currently piloting the collection of data on locally important buildings in one part of the AONB and are collecting information on the current condition of these buildings as part of this work. This will form a baseline against which future change can be monitored. We are exploring whether this work, which in the pilot area is being supported by the Parish and District Council, could be rolled out to other parts of the AONB.

A key threat to the AONB is change taking place under permitted development rights, for example, replacement of curtilage hedges and characteristic stone walls with ubiquitous close board fencing. We are currently exploring a collaboration with a different Parish Council to see if this change can be documented through analysis of Google Maps imagery.

The potential loss of Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL) data cut to AONB boundaries, provided in the past by Government Agencies, is a serious threat to our monitoring work.

We could do more to understand the qualitative experiences of those who live, work and visit over the wider AONB area, especially the areas outside the hills.

MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

5 APRIL 2019

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC HEALTH BENEFITS OF PART OF THE MALVERN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the study undertaken;**
- b) Comment on draft results;**
- c) Make suggestions as to how results/the final report could be best utilised with a view to engaging others in health-related work in the AONB; and**
- d) Await publication of a final report before quoting from the study.**

Background

1. Natural Capital can be defined as the stock or elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people.¹ Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as food, timber, aesthetic and recreational opportunities including related health benefits, climate, water quality and flood regulation. The effective management of Natural Capital is key to the Government's ambitions to improve the environment, with Natural Capital being mentioned more than 100 times in its new 25-year Environment Plan.
2. On Friday 17 November 2017 members of the JAC received a presentation from Oliver Holzinger (from the Consultancy for Environmental Economics and Policy - CEEP) on a Natural Capital Scoping Study for the AONB. The scoping study report can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2NNSZkh>. This report was a first step in developing a better understanding of the Natural Capital of the AONB, with a view to helping to engage others and to informing decision making within and between those organisations which influence the character and use of the AONB.
3. The human and economic costs associated with poor health and lifestyles are now only too clear. For example, Public Health England puts the annual costs of physical inactivity to the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups at between £455 and £944 million annually (based on just 5 diseases and including no indirect costs). In 2009/10 the economic and social costs of mental health problems in England were estimated to be in the region of £105 billion (Centre for Mental Health, 2010).
4. It is increasingly recognised that high quality, accessible, green space plays an important role in fostering health and wellbeing by providing a setting for physical activity. A growing body of evidence also points to a causal relationship between greenspace and mental health. For example, a study conducted by Cohen-Cline et al

¹ Costanza 2008

(2015) shows that greater access to greenspace is associated with a lower incidence of depression.

5. The Malvern Hills themselves have long been associated with promoting health and wellbeing and it is certain that the area continues to play an important role in doing so today. However, until now no attempt has been made to quantify the significance of this role. As part of its ongoing work related to Natural Capital the AONB Partnership has recently commissioned an assessment of the economic health benefits of the Malvern Hills and Commons within the AONB.

6. NB This report has not been finalised at the time of writing so the following is based on draft work only. Committee members are asked not to use or quote from this JAC paper and to wait until a final report is available.

Summary

Aims and Objectives

7. The overall aim of the project was to assess the economic benefits derived from (part of) the Malvern Hills AONB in respect of people's health and wellbeing.
8. Specific objectives were as follows:
 - i. To calculate and monetise the physical health benefits derived from the land owned and managed by the Malvern Hills Trust in the AONB (the Malvern Hills and Commons);
 - ii. To calculate and monetise the mental health benefits derived from the same land;
 - iii. To clearly outline the methodologies and principles employed in calculating economic assessments used and to acknowledge any perceived or real weaknesses or shortcomings in the methodological approach, data etc.

Study Area

9. The study area was the Malvern Hills and Commons within the Malvern Hills AONB. This covers approximately 3000 acres of land owned and managed or under the jurisdiction of the Malvern Hills Trust.

Methodology

10. The study was carried out by an Environmental Economist (Oliver Holzinger from CEEP) and was based on the principles of Natural Capital Accounting which is a process for calculating the total flow of services in a given ecosystem or region. In light of the absence of accurate visitor count data for the Malvern Hills and Commons a benefit transfer approach was employed, whereby available information from studies already completed in another location and/or context was transferred to the study area. However, locally derived and up to date data collected from a 2018 visitor survey of the Malvern Hills and Commons was also utilised. The methodology employed and all associated assumptions and caveats can be found in the report itself. It should be stated here that the approach employed is experimental in nature.

Draft Results

11. A summary of the financial value of the physical and mental health benefits provided by the Malvern Hills and Commons is found in the table below.

12. Monetary Accounts	
Annual Natural Capital Value	<i>Central estimate</i>
Physical health benefit	£4,195,168
Mental health benefits	£1,623,790
Total	£5,818,958
Capitalised Natural Capital Value	<i>Central estimate</i>
Physical health benefit	£219,822,910
Mental health benefits	£85,085,109
Total	£304,908,018
Present values, 2018 prices; capital value discounted at 1.5% over 100 years.	

NB These figures should not be quoted at this time.

What happens next?

13. Central government has made it clear that it wants to create a more active society. It has also made it clear that it expects designated landscapes, including AONBs, to play a part in realising this ambition. The AONB Unit sees this economic assessment work as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

14. The Malvern Hills AONB Unit is represented on the Malvern Hills District Health and Wellbeing Partnership. The author of the report will be presenting the findings of this work to this Partnership in May 2019. It is hoped that the study will provide something of a springboard for a greater engagement with this group and with health care professionals more generally. In particular, the results should be helpful in articulating the role of (this area of) the AONB in contributing to health and wellbeing. It is hoped that those in charge of health care budgets may give greater consideration to the role that the AONB can play in preventative healthcare intervention, though the Unit is under no illusion about how difficult it might be to bring this about.

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

5 APRIL 2019

AONB BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Recommendation

- 1. The Committee is recommended to:**
 - a) Note the budget for 2019/20; and**
 - b) Comment on the overall direction and work priorities for the year ahead.**

Background

2. A grant application to support the core work of the AONB Partnership in 2019/20 was considered by members of the Steering Group before being submitted to Defra in January 2019. 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

3. 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

4. The total budget for 2019/20 is expected to be £191,298 (187,976). The increase is the result of a real terms protection in funding to AONB Partnerships from Central Government. 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. 2019/20 marks the end of the four-year inflation-linked funding settlement put in place in 2015. No indication has yet been provided about future funding contributions.

5. Of the total, £168,423 (£165,104) can be identified as 'core' funding with £22,875 (£22,872) allocated to the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). Central government is providing all the funding for the SDF and a maximum of 75% of the total core budget, a combined total of £149,224 (£146,700). Local authorities in the area are expected to provide £42,074 of match funding to core costs in the following proportions:

Herefordshire Council - £16,334¹
Worcestershire County Council - £13,268

¹ This amount includes a contribution to project work.

Malvern Hills District Council - £11,000
Forest of Dean District Council - £872
Gloucestershire County Council - £600

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 AONB 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 2014/15. 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

7. Salaries look set to rise by 2% for staff of Worcestershire County Council. Additional increases apparent in Appendix 1 relate to back-funding pension contributions.

Work Priorities

8. The Unit's work programme for 2019/20 is centred around the implementation of the new AONB Management Plan (2019/20).

Project Funding

9. It is hoped that a small amount of external funding linked to the Natural Networks grant programme (Worcestershire only) will be secured.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Appendix 1 –Budget for Malvern Hills AONB Partnership in 2019/20

Element	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Staff (costs inc. salary, NI, super, training, travel, NI, backfunding pensions etc)								
AONB Manager	£57,399	£52,160	£52,410	£52,405	£51,910	£50,400	£50,500	£49,780
AONB Assistant Manager	£43,500	£39,510	£39,600	£39,500	£39,300	£38,220	£38,320	£37,770
AONB Technical Support Officer	£18,202	£15,650	£15,770	£15,770	£15,570	£15,160	£14,960	£15,488
Strategy Officer/Planning Advice		£8,000	£7,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000
Project Officer	£8,000					£3,669		
<i>Sub total</i>	<i>£127,101</i>	<i>£115,320</i>	<i>£114,780</i>	<i>£115,675</i>	<i>£114,780</i>	<i>£115,449</i>	<i>£111,780</i>	<i>£111,038</i>
Accommodation/office equipment	£9,072	£9,072	£8,742	£8,742	£8,742	£8,242	£8,242	£8,242
Partnership budget for PR, events etc.								
NAAONB membership	£2,575	£2,575	£2,400	£2,400				
Annual review	£358	£400	£400	£400				
Small grants scheme for landscape and biodiversity improvements	£4,000	£3,000	£3,600	£3,600				
Landscape scale project development	£4,580	£3,000	£3,500	£3,500				
External advice	£3,500	£1,500						
State of AONB report		£5,000						
Management Plan review		£9,000						
Large projects	£5,000	£5,000	£6,980	£4,380				
Communications	£3,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000				
<i>Sub total</i>	<i>£23,013</i>	<i>£31,475</i>	<i>£24,880</i>	<i>£22,280</i>	<i>£22,280</i>	<i>£22,111</i>	<i>£27,236</i>	<i>£27,300</i>
Partnership running costs (Council support, IT, personnel, finance etc.)	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237	£9,237
Sustainable Development Fund	£22,875	£22,872	£25,991	£25,502	£24,000	£24,000	£34,807	£45,140
Total Budget	£191,298	£187,976	£183,875	£181,436	£179,039	£179,039	£191,302	£200,957

Appendix 2 – Voluntary contributions from Parish/Town Councils

Organisation	Contribution				
	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Colwall PC	£750	£750	£750		£1,000
Cradley PC	£100	£100	£100	£200	£100
Ledbury TC	£500				£350
Malvern Wells PC	£1,600	£1,600	£1,600	£800	£800
Little Malvern & Welland PC	£250	£250	£250	£250	
West Malvern PC	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300
Wellington Heath PC				£500	
Berrow PC	£50				
Total	£3,550	£3,000	£3,000	£2,050	£2,550

Appendix 3 – Unit Work Programme for 2019/20

Management Plan Policy/Actions	Task	Lead Officer
Landscape		
LP1 Manage the landscape of the AONB in accordance with key documents such as the AONB Landscape Strategy, Landscape Character Assessments, Historic Landscape Characterisations and other guidance documents.	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 develop a Master plan for the showground. Work with the Three Counties Agricultural Society to enhance 3 landscape elements at the showground	
LP3 Promote positive landscape change to landowners, managers, developers, government and all those with an influence over land.	Support a range of landowners through the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund Plant new hedgerow trees across two holdings	
LP4 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.		
Illustrative Actions		
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.	Various 60 th anniversary activities (including postcards showcasing different parts of the AONB) Launch first Dark Sky Discovery Sites	
Undertake surveys and research to better understand and monitor the condition, and rate of change, of landscape character.	Subject to discussions with University of Worcester	
Identify appropriate climate change mitigation works, such as new habitat creation, within the AONB and its setting.	Devise a woodland creation plan for land adjacent to Lake House (Malvern Wells)	
Geodiversity		

GP1 Secure best practice in geodiversity management within and adjacent to designated sites.		
GP2 Conserve the geodiversity resource in line with Geodiversity Action Plans.	Support and resource H&WEHT volunteers in managing x Local Geological Sites (LGS)	
GP3 Ensure that landowners refer to site management plans before undertaking work on LGSs.		
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.		
Illustrative Actions		
Undertake survey, research and monitoring to secure complete information on the state of the AONB's geodiversity resource, including recording temporary exposures before reburying.		
Seek to continue the LGS management programme using local volunteers.		
Biodiversity		
BP1 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 1 of the road verges pilot project (with some funding from Natural networks).	
BP2 Conserve, enhance and expand key habitats and populations of key species in line with local biodiversity priorities and the England Biodiversity Strategy.	Work with partners to apply for at least 1 grant within the Worcestershire Natural Networks programme.	
BP3 In exercising development control decisions, secure developer contributions to enhance the natural environment.		
BP4 Improve knowledge and understanding of the AONB's biodiversity, to guide management and to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and actions.	Collect new data to inform landscape scale conservation in the north of the AONB. Progress year 2 of the 'Searching for missing species in the Malverns' project.	

	Identify, collect and send biological data collected as part of the planning process to the appropriate BRC.	
BP5 Safeguard biodiversity from potential damaging impacts arising from development or other activities.		
Illustrative actions		
Undertake survey and research to provide decision-makers with accurate and appropriate data.		
Restore the condition of degraded habitats in line with local and national biodiversity priorities.	3 neglected traditional orchards subject to beneficial management	
Historic Environment		
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, national and locally developed advice and guidance.		
HP2 Ensure the sustainable use of historic buildings and other heritage assets, particularly those identified as being at risk.		
HP3 Promote greater public understanding of, and engagement with, the historic environment of the AONB.		
Illustrative actions		
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 one Parish Council to submit proposals for listing of locally important heritage assets (in Worcestershire part of AONB)	
Prepare and review appropriate management documents for key heritage assets to improve future conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.	Conservation Management Plan prepared for Hope End Registered Park and Garden.	
Farming and Forestry		
FP1 Ensure that agricultural and forestry practices include: • sustainable production of produce	Work with Severn Rivers Trust and other partners to help secure effective water management	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable utilisation of soil, minimising erosion • effective water catchment management • avoidance of direct pollution and measures to reduce diffuse pollution • farm waste minimisation and recycling 		
FP2 Bring woodlands, orchards and other characteristic habitats into favourable conservation condition through encouraging and supporting management regimes that provide an economic return.		
FP3 Ensure that all new woodland planting in the AONB is largely of native species; no more than 20% being non-native species.		
FP4 Create native woodland in appropriate locations.	Devise a woodland creation plan for land adjacent to Lake House (Malvern Wells)	
FP5 Support appropriate measures to monitor and control pests, diseases and invasive non-native plant and animal species to protect food production and biodiversity resources.	Support for Signal Crayfish monitoring and eradication in Suckley Brook	
FP6 Encourage the take-up of options and management practices that benefit the natural and cultural capital of the AONB.	<p>Deliver year 1 of the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund west of the Malvern Hills.</p> <p>Work with NE and others to ensure that new CS grants benefit x owners in the AONB.</p>	
FP7 Promote local and seasonal produce and support the development of local services and markets.		
FP8 Maintain and develop the skills required to manage the landscape and its special qualities.		
Illustrative actions		
Identify the natural and cultural capital and ecosystem services to be key components of future agri-environment, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the AONB.		

Support business partners who develop relevant local provenance brands.		
Living and Working		
LWP1 Produce and adhere to community-led plans, strategies and statements (such as Neighbourhood Development Plans) that conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB 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.	
LWP2 Support community initiatives that promote the creation and management of key habitats, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, recycling, community transport and community housing.		
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 and 5G mobile phone coverage.		
LWP4 Support the provision of a variety of housing that is appropriate to the character of the area and meets local community needs.	Participate in the review of the SWDP and ensure that, if necessary, the AONB helps to play its part in meeting local housing need.	
Illustrative actions		
Develop model housing policies for adoption in Neighbourhood Development Plans.		
Raise awareness of 'carbon footprint' issues and opportunities.		
Built Development		
BDP1 Allocations of land for development in the AONB and its setting should be informed by Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments and/or Landscape and Visual (Impact) Assessments, as appropriate.	Influence the SWDP process to ensure adherence to this policy.	
BDP2 Development in the AONB and its setting should be in accordance with good practice	Promote the AONB views guidance and ensure that key views are recognised in relevant planning responses.	

<p>guidance including that produced by the AONB Partnership.</p>	<p>Assemble and showcase good practice examples of development – on the AONB website</p>	
<p>BDP3 Development in the AONB should be based on convincing evidence of local need. Priority should be given to the provision of affordable housing and enhancing local services.</p>	<p>Influence the SWDP process to ensure adherence to this policy.</p>	
<p>BDP4 Development proposals that may affect land in the AONB, including those in its setting, should protect and/or enhance key views and landscape character. AONB guidance relating to views and development in views should be used where relevant.</p>	<p>Through planning activity ensure adherence to AONB guidance and Malvern Development Plan.</p>	
<p>BDP5 Lighting schemes should be kept to a minimum and only installed where absolutely necessary. Light pollution should be avoided through adherence to good practice design and through practice, for example, dimming or turning lighting off wherever possible.</p>	<p>Use new lighting guidance to ensure adherence through planning responses.</p>	
<p>BDP6 There should be a presumption against the loss of traditional orchards to development, or changes to other uses.</p>		
<p>BDP7 Equestrian development should proceed in accordance with best practice guidance, including the AONB Partnership guidance on keeping horses in the landscape.</p>	<p>Promote good practice guidance on keeping horses, in general and in relation to specific development proposals</p> <p>Identify and promote a good practice pilot site</p>	
<p>BDP8 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.</p>		

<p>BDP9 Farm-scale polytunnels for commercial use would not normally be an accepted form of development in the AONB. Where polytunnel development is proposed and where economic benefits are being weighed against landscape impact, priority will be afforded to protecting the natural beauty of AONBs. A whole farm approach should be taken to ensure an acceptable location, design and scale.</p>		
<p>BDP10 Support the recycling, re-use and limited and appropriate 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.</p>	<p>Continue to promote and support the Malvern Hills stone bank.</p>	
<p>BDP11 The reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings should be supported, especially where this helps retain the distinctive character of the AONB.</p>		
<p>BDP12 A Master Plan will be developed for the Three Counties Showground. This should ensure that the site and any future development and landscaping is effectively integrated into the nationally designated landscape of the AONB.</p>	<p>Work with the TCAS to produce a Masterplan.</p>	
<p>BDP13 The cumulative impact of small-scale change and development will be monitored. Data gathered will be used to inform decisions and to revise and/or develop policy.</p>	<p>Work with Colwall Parish Council to monitor hedge/stonewall replacement in the parish.</p>	
<p>BDP14 In the setting of the AONB, Local Planning Authorities should consider identifying locally important landscape areas to conserve the special qualities and features of the AONB and their enjoyment by people.</p>	<p>Explore an approach to defining the setting of the AONB, based on recent LSCA work.</p>	
<p>Illustrative actions</p>		
<p>Maintain and promote a programme of guidance on key planning and design issues</p>		

appropriate to the AONB, aimed at planning authorities, developers and other interested parties, that takes account of the special distinctiveness of the area.		
Explore the use of the Natural Capital Planning Tool to assess development proposals for their likely impact on the AONB's Natural Capital and the ecosystem services it provides to people.		
Develop a model policy for locally important landscape designations in areas adjoining the AONB, to help safeguard important vistas and views to and from the AONB.		
Tourism		
TP1 Stimulate and support sustainable tourism practices in the AONB.	Reprint and distribute the revised AONB visitor map and guide (as required).	
TP2 Provide a quality public realm with good access and accessibility to facilities and features that attract tourists.		
TP3 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.		
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 Work in partnership to develop the Malverns as an area for showcasing new tourism technologies.		
Illustrative action		
Raise awareness of the AONB and promote the AONB and adjoining areas as a sustainable destination in its own right.		
Transport and Accessibility		
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.	
TRP2 Promote sustainable transport to enhance tranquillity	Comment on individual planning applications that may	

and minimise the impact of traffic on the AONB; encouraging a safer and more attractive environment for walking, cycling and horse riding.	see a significant or cumulative impact in traffic.	
TRP3 Reuse and refurbish appropriate highway furniture and fittings to strengthen the special character of the AONB.		
TRP4 Coordinate the 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.		
TRP6 Ensure that new developments on the periphery of the AONB do not give rise to significant traffic increases and associated effects on tranquillity and enjoyment. Seek compensation for such effects where relevant.	Comment on individual planning applications that may see a significant or cumulative impact in traffic.	
TRP7 Develop and promote sustainable transport options to meet local accessibility requirements.	Work with WCC on a pilot for Community Transport to heritage points of interest in the AONB	
Illustrative actions		
Restore and maintain tranquillity in the AONB through traffic mitigation and reduction measures.		
Develop dedicated routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders within the AONB and between the AONB and surrounding areas.	Support WCC in attempts to create an appropriate Active Travel Corridor in Malvern Wells	
Recreation and Access		
RP1 Pursue appropriate opportunities to spread recreational use to those areas that can sustain it and that will benefit from it, ensuring the provision of suitable infrastructure.		
RP2 Ensure that the rights of way network and associated infrastructure (signs, gates, etc) do not detract unnecessarily from the special qualities of the landscape.		

RP3 Seek a consistent approach to the development and delivery of access through Rights of Way management and Improvement Plans.		
RP4 Developments that are likely to lead to an increase in negative recreational effects in an area should contribute to the costs of mitigating and managing these effects.		
RP5 Develop, support and promote programmes and projects that improve health and well-being for all, especially those that are most in need.		
RP6 Increase the range of opportunities for those with restricted mobility and health impairments to experience the AONB.	Undertake 2 projects with key partners	
Illustrative actions		
Increase the range of activities and media through which people can learn about the AONB.		
Establish a baseline position on the location and extent of desire lines on the northern Malvern Hills.	Commission photography to produce a baseline	
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.		
Information and Interpretation		
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.		
IP2 Promote products and services that support the special qualities of the Malvern Hills.		
IP3 Raise awareness of 'being in the Malvern Hills AONB' and the significance of the designation, including through the provision of appropriate signage.	Work with 2 Parish Councils to establish new village signage including reference to the AONB	

	Develop volunteers to support a John Muir Trust awards in the AONB	
IP4 Work in partnerships with the technology and science sectors to develop innovative ways of accessing and using information.		
IP5 Enhance local distinctiveness through the maintenance and restoration of appropriate signs and through sign removal where appropriate.		
Illustrative actions		
Promote and provide clear and simple information on alternative transport modes to the private car for accessing the countryside.		
Develop a Malvern's area education resource in conjunction with local schools and/or other interested parties.		
Volunteering		
VP1 Support, encourage and coordinate effective voluntary activity, in all its shapes and forms, that helps deliver the AONB Management Plan.		
VP2 Develop and support networks of volunteers able to assist in specialist activities.	Practical and financial support to Crayfish and geodiversity volunteers	
VP3 Encourage and support Parish Councils to achieve high standards in working closely with voluntary and community groups and meeting local needs and aspirations within the AONB.		
Illustrative action		
Explore the potential to develop and support a coordinated volunteer network for the whole of the AONB and surrounding area.		

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MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 5 APRIL 2019

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2019/20 – UPDATE REPORT

Background

1. The table below shows the Sustainable Development Fund's grant commitments for the financial year 2018/19. The budget is £22,872 and there is a current overspend of c.£28 that will be absorbed by reducing the claim on the admin costs.

Summary

SDF Budget Report as at 11/3/19		
	Budget	£22,872.00
No	Project Title	Committed
	Committed	
179	Butterfly leaflet	£300.00
147	Eastnor Woodyard Centre Interpretation Panels	£1,000.00
171	Letterboxing on the Malvern Hills	£600.00
177	Troubadour of the Hills: Poetry in the Malverns (£1500 for19/20)	£724.20
180	Bromesberrow Biodiversity Improvements yr 2	£2,500.00
186	Mindfulness Walking	£442.00
182	Colwall Green & Dingle phone boxes	£348.00
187	Geosite Maintenance	£1,576.00
185	Mathon Ct woodland	£4,300.00
165	Shire Ditch Survey (Flight done -cost covered by Historic England)	
183	Missing in the Malverns	£3,000.00
191	Colwall Orchard walk guide	£950.00
195	Barton Court History	£126.00
196	Crayfish	£582.55
197	Malvern Climate Leaflet	£500.00
199	Natural Capital - Health	£3,500.00
200	West Malvern Biodiversity Improvements	£370.00
	Total Committed + spent	£20,818.75
	Fund administration at 10%	£2,081.88
	Total	£22,900.63

Recommendation

1. The Committee is requested to:

- a) Note and comment on the report.**
- b) Contact David Armitage with project ideas for 2019/20**

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5 APRIL 2019**INFORMATION ITEMS**

**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 countryside beyond

FP1 – Encourage the take-up of grant options and management practices that benefit

ProjectNew trees

10 new 'standard' trees (Oaks and Perry Pears) have been planted in hedgerows at Eight Oaks Farm near Castlemorton Common. The AONB Unit is exploring whether funding can be obtained to plant further new trees in suitable hedgerows in the AONB.

The Unit assisted Malvern Wells Parish Council with the acquisition of 3 Worcester Black Pear trees that have been planted on the edge of the village green in the parish

Finding Rare Species in the Malverns

This project 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. A programme of training and survey events is now being finalised for the 2019 survey season. This will be the second and final year of the project and all attempts are being made to maximise the survey work that takes place in the AONB.

Highways Verges Management Pilot Project.

An invitation to tender for this pilot project was issued in the summer of 2018 but met with no responses. A subsequent invitation was issued over the winter of 2018/19 but this was met with just one response, which was unacceptable. Consequently, the project is being refocussed onto more intensive management of a small number of verge areas. It is hoped that this will progress in the Autumn of 2019, again with the intention of making use of Natural Networks programme funding (a grants project funded by the European Structural Investment Fund and managed by Worcestershire County Council).

Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The AONB Unit successfully bid to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for an area of land west of the Malvern Hills. The Facilitation Fund is a government

the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB

supported fund to help people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the natural environment at a landscape scale. The Malvern Hills group has now had its inaugural event which covered the subject of tree disease and plant health, with presentations made by experts in both the public and private sectors. In February an event on Managing Boar and Deer was held at Eastnor. 25 land owners and managers attended this event

Hope End Park

This is on Historic England's Heritage Assets Register. There are 6 owners of it. Attempts are being made by Historic England and the AONB Unit to get a consensus to produce a plan for the park to conserve its 'Gardenesque' style

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

Malvern Hills AONB Environs Study

The AONB Unit is working alongside the South Worcestershire Planning Authorities on a Malvern Hills AONB Environs study. This involves an assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of different areas of land around Malvern and further afield to different forms of development. The report will form part of the evidence base for the south Worcestershire authorities in considering the next development plan and future housing allocations. It should also be useful in helping us to better understand what constitutes the setting of the AONB in this area. A final report is expected to be available in the summer.

Colwall views study

Following on from work carried out for Malvern Town Council, a study to identify key viewpoints from and across Colwall has been completed. This has helped to generate an evidence base which now underpins a key policy in the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan and should help to secure these key views for the future.

New guidance documents

The AONB Unit has recently closed a period of public consultation on two new guidance documents: 'Guidance on respecting landscape in views' and 'Good practice guide for outdoor lighting.' It is hoped that both documents will be published in the Spring.

That people understand and celebrate the area and its designation as an AONB.

2019 marks the 60th anniversary of the designation of the Malvern Hills AONB, and the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act which brought AONBs into being. The AONB Unit would appreciate offers and suggestions for how these important anniversaries could be used to help raise awareness and understanding. **It is particularly keen to hear about partner activities which could be used to help meet this aim.**

RO1 The development and management of recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation

Visitor Survey

The final report from a small visitor survey that took place on the Malvern hills and commons is available at:

<https://bit.ly/2VZWszm>

The results are worth a look, being valuable in informing the work of both the Malvern Hills Trust and the AONB Partnership.

For example:

- 60% of respondents were aware that the hills are managed by the Malvern Hills Trust (Conservators) whilst only 15% mentioned the AONB when asked if they were aware of any particular designations or terms that apply to the area.
- 98% of respondents rated the management of the area as good or very good.
- 99% of respondents said that levels of enjoyment of their visit were either high or very high.
- The 'beautiful/pretty/great views' was the most popular response when people were asked what they particularly liked about the area (mentioned by 48% of respondents).

The visitor survey did not count numbers of users of the Malvern Hills and Commons but there are moves afoot to estimate a total.

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

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