

Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB

Management Plan
2009 - 2014

■ Foreword	4
■ Introduction	6
■ What makes this area special?	10
■ A vision for the AONB	12
■ Plan structure	14
■ Policy context	18
■ Theme 1 - Cross-cutting	20
■ Theme 2 - Distinctive local landscapes	26
■ Theme 3 - Vibrant local communities	42
■ Theme 4 - Towards a sustainable economy	50
■ Financial implications	60
■ Spatial issues by landscape type	62
■ Implementation	68
■ Appendices	74
■ Glossary and Explanation of Terms	86
■ Credits	90



Foreword

"To be classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has a fine ring to it."

Desmond Hawkins 1980



Foreword from the Chair Dr GR Potts

Walk along the tops of any of our downs and escarpments and you look down on truly beautiful historic

landscapes. We may complain about heavy vehicles, 4x4s on Rights of Way, about litter or fly-tipping, light pollution, aircraft noise and various undesirable developments, but we can still be immensely proud of our landscapes and of the 1981 decision to designate Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs as an AONB.

This Plan is faithful to the original published in 2004, distilled from a vast input of ideas by residents. It is however more streamlined with a simplified strategic framework. An annual review of the delivery of results will guide the Partnership Panel, discipline the professional team in Cranborne and give more flexibility in reacting to circumstances as they change.

The European Landscape Convention came into operation in the UK, on 1st March 2007. The Convention defines landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors". Put another way, landscape is our living natural and cultural heritage. Ours is essentially a result of centuries of agriculture and hunting still enjoyed by residents (32,000 people live in our AONB) and by visitors from the cities and towns seeking havens of peace, tranquillity and culture.

However, despite the fact that the government has underpinned our agricultural economy for many decades,

many farming communities, the bedrock of our AONB, have waned. Family farms, farm and woodland based businesses and especially mixed farms, have sadly declined and these are the ones that used to bring most wildlife biodiversity to the landscape.

Fortunately, all our AONB partners, and especially Natural England, are rising to the challenge of restoring ecological diversity and rural business sustainability.

With the agri-environment measures many can now work together to restore as much of our traditional farmland ecology as practicable, rare but formerly abundant wild flowers, butterflies, grasshoppers, bats, hares, lapwings, buntings and partridges. One requirement is for a better harmonisation of landowner and public sector investment in wildlife habitats especially where these are unpopular with farmers but very effective for treasured wildlife.

As well as recovering some of our past biodiversity, we face new and growing challenges: increasing pressure for development, a changing climate and the globalisation of agriculture. These 'forces for change' will impact on all aspects of life within the AONB and are emphasised at the beginning of the Plan.

There is much to do and this Management Plan, the product of a huge amount of collective practical experience, is needed to provide us with a strategic framework and the necessary discipline. We have an excellent team, a thorough and realistic new Management Plan and a challenge second to none. I commend the Plan to you and wish everyone involved that luck we all need for success.



Introduction

"Jade-green downs..
rise up..as if the pent
up mass of the downs
was about to burst forth
thundering onto the
plain"

- Treves, 1906.

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Management Plan

This document is the statutory Management Plan for the nationally designated and protected landscape of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is a plan for all those that have a responsibility to look after this precious and treasured landscape.



Please refer to **Map 1** in the accompanying guide

The 2004-09 Management Plan was subject to review from September 2007. Responses were received from 66 organisations and individuals. The revised draft plan was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment and to public consultation between September and October 2008. The revised plan has been formally approved by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Partnership Panel and relevant local authorities. It has been published with the assistance of the partners responsible for much of the plan's delivery. The Partnership Delivery Plan, which sets out the programme for achieving the Management Plan's aims and objectives, will be reviewed annually by the Partnership Panel.

This Management Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Partnership Delivery Plan, the Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation and the Planning Protocol can all be found on the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB website: www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk

Enquiries about these documents can be made to the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Team through the website or by telephone: 01725 517417.

The significance of AONB designation

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1981, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Following the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the government confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent. The protection given to both types of area by the land use planning system should

therefore be equivalent.¹

The AONB landscape is also of international importance, recognised as a Category V Protected Landscape by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is an evolved cultural landscape, managed and nurtured by people over millennia. Those who manage the land are central to the future of this landscape. It is inevitable and appropriate that this cultural landscape will continue to develop but this needs to be in ways that conserve and enhance its special qualities.

There are 41 AONBs nationally, covering 15.6% of the land in England and Wales. Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs is the 6th largest and is one of twelve AONBs in the South West region.



Please refer to **Map 2** in the accompanying guide

The majority of Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs lies within the South West region however 6.8% of the AONB (the Hampshire section) falls within the South East region. In the South West, together with the two National Parks (Exmoor and Dartmoor), the family of protected areas cover some 38% of the countryside of the region.

Primary purpose of designation

The primary purpose of AONB designation is 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'².

'In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of economic and social development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.

Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.'³

1. Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, paragraph 21, HMSO 2004.

2. Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Section 82

3. Countryside Commission Policy Statement on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 1991

Definition of natural beauty

Section 114 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 states that references to the preservation or conservation of the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the preservation or, as the case may be, conservation of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features. This definition was further refined by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. In section 99 of that Act, it is stated that natural beauty can include land used for agriculture or woodland, as a park or any other area whose flora, fauna or physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape.

The natural beauty of the AONB is indeed very much concerned with the landform, geology, plants, animals and landscape features but also includes the rich history of human settlement over the centuries. AONBs are cultural, living landscapes both by virtue of the species and habitats within them but also due to the fact that their special qualities can only be maintained by continuing human activity. The natural beauty of the AONB is seen as a blend of both the rich natural and cultural heritage. The AONB Partnership finds that the presence of the expansive, open downlands, many literary and historic associations together with the high levels of tranquillity confirmed by the Campaign to Protect Rural England in 2007, comprise important elements of the natural beauty of the AONB.

The importance of this Management Plan

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, placed a statutory duty on Local Authorities to prepare and publish an AONB management plan and to review it at five yearly intervals. This is the first review of Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 2004-09 and sets out objectives and policies for 2009-14, together with actions for the first year, 2009-10. The process by which the original plan has been reviewed is set out in Appendix 1.

This plan sets out objectives and policies for AONB partners that are believed to be realistic and achievable in the next five years. Working together, these targets can be realised to the benefit of the landscapes and communities of this nationally designated area.

The AONB Partnership

Since designation in 1981, the AONB has covered the administrative areas of eleven Local Authorities: Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset County Councils and seven District Councils: Salisbury, West Wiltshire, East Dorset, North Dorset, New Forest, Mendip and South Somerset. Publication of this plan followed the formation of a new unitary authority, Wiltshire Council, replacing Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury and West Wiltshire District Councils. The percentage cover for each of the constituent Local Authorities from 1st April 2009 is given in Map 3.



Please refer to **Map 3** in the accompanying guide

The national, regional and local organisations represented on the AONB Partnership have contributed to this revised Management Plan 2009-14, as have a myriad of interest groups, local communities and individuals. The Partnership structure is shown in Appendix 2.

European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention is a Treaty devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. The Convention was ratified by the UK on the 1 March 2007.

The Convention seeks to ensure enhanced landscape planning, protection and management through quality objectives and an effective policy framework. The convention highlights the need to:

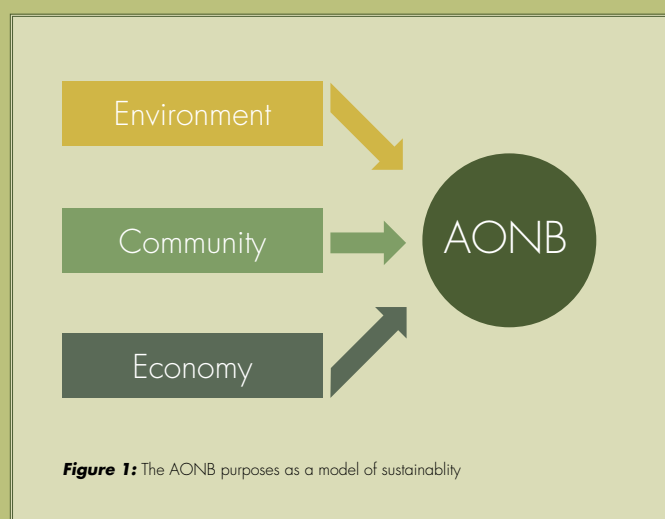
- recognise landscape in law;
- to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes; and
- to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.

The Convention also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy (including cultural, economic and social policies) and there is a particular emphasis on the need for co-operation in implementing programmes relating to landscapes that cross administrative and national boundaries. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is in a prime position to showcase the UK's commitment to the Convention.

Delivery of the Management Plan

Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 it is a legal duty for all relevant authorities to “have regard to” the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the area. These relevant authorities include all statutory bodies and all tiers of government, including parish councils and holders of public office.

Successful implementation of this Management Plan is beyond the resources of the Partnership Panel or AONB Team alone and will require the active collaboration and participation of all those involved in its management. This is a plan for the geographic area of the Cranborne



Chase and West Wiltshire Downs and not for any single organisation within it. Implementation of the objectives, policies and actions needs the support and involvement of the many organisations and individuals who play key roles in the future of the area. Many of these have been involved in drawing up the plan. Organisations represented on the Partnership are shown in Appendix 3.

For government, local authorities, other public bodies and other ‘relevant authorities’ active support for the implementation of this plan is the key to satisfying their ‘Section 85’ duty. Local parish councils, statutory agencies and regional bodies acting individually or collaboratively through Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements can all contribute to fulfil the AONB vision.



What makes this area special?

“We could help others, adults and children, to enjoy this fabulous area, as we know it so well”

Tarrant Gunville – 20th May 2003

Forming part of the extensive belt of chalkland that stretches across southern central England, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a landscape of national significance.

The lush, wooded clay Vale of Wardour spreads out through the centre of the AONB, separating two distinct areas of chalk: to the south is the unusually wooded downland of Cranborne Chase with its steeply cut coombes and dry valleys so typical of chalk landscapes; to the north, the West Wiltshire Downs are more elevated, rising up to Grovely Wood on a major ridge.

Traditional downland pasture is now largely confined to the steeper slopes, while large, rectangular fields emphasise the chalklands' open character. The valleys of the Ebble and Wylye support a large proportion of chalk pasture, with many hedgerows and copses. In the north west, the AONB's greensand fringe of wooded ridges and valleys includes rich parklands such as Longleat and Stourhead.

The AONB is of great ecological importance. Its internationally and nationally protected sites range from ancient downland, chalk rivers and meadows to scattered deciduous woodland, which include remnants of the ancient Cranborne Chase royal hunting area and the former Royal Forests of Selwood and Gillingham.

In historic terms, the landscapes of the AONB today are extraordinarily rich. Evidence of successive eras of human activity and settlements can often be lost but not in this AONB; the landscapes offer up evidence of the imprint of man, carved out over the centuries. Prehistoric monuments of national importance, historic borderlands, ancient field systems, droves and routeways all have stories to tell. An Historic Landscape Characterisation was published in 2008¹ that provides the evidence for and descriptions of the historic landscape evolution.

In 2003, an Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) drew together all the features and attributes that contribute to the distinctive and outstanding character of the AONB. It explored the physical, ecological, visual, historic and cultural forces that shape the present day landscape. Recognising the area as a dynamic, working landscape, it also encompassed the social, economic and recreational characteristics that contribute to its character.

Its special qualities include its diversity, distinctiveness, sense of history and remoteness, dark night skies and tranquillity. With mists slowly forming over sprawling downlands, it can be an almost moody, evocative landscape, with sights and sounds of bygone times, never far away. The immense historic and ecological riches are held in high esteem by local people. The rural, agricultural character is emphasised by widely scattered hamlets and villages. It is a deeply rural area with no large settlements (Tisbury being the largest village in the AONB).

The diversity of the AONB can be appreciated through the eight Landscape Types described within the LCA and set out in pages 62 - 67. Each of the landscape types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover, and historical evolution:

- Chalk Escarpments
- Open Chalk Downland
- Wooded Chalk Downland
- Downland Hills
- Chalk River Valleys
- Greensand Terrace
- Greensand Hills
- Rolling Clay Vales

The Landscape Types have been further sub-divided into fifteen Landscape Character Areas that are smaller, discrete areas with a distinct and recognizable local identity. Further details on the special characteristics of each Landscape Type are outlined in the Integrated Landscape Assessment 2003 for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs and the AONB booklet 'Sustaining Landscape Character' published in 2006.

1. The Historic Landscape Characterisation 2008 and Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2003 can be downloaded from www.ccrwwdaonb.org.uk



A vision for the AONB

“We must have
a living, working
countryside through
successful, profitable
farming”

Landowners and Farmers Forum,
10th December 2002

The vision of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB was adopted after substantial public participation in 2004.

The Vision includes three subdivisions (environment, community and economy) that reflect the AONB's contribution to sustainability. Consultation in 2008 confirmed that the vision remains relevant and the AONB Partnership has agreed that this vision will not be changed until the full public consultation proposed in 2014.

Figure 2: Vision For 2029

From the past, present and into the future, this nationally recognised landscape sustains an evocative character that breathes a life of its own. Its characteristic vibrant villages, profoundly rural character and local sense of pride are tangible to all who live and visit here or just pass through.

Internationally important chalk rivers, diverse downland and vale landscapes are steeped in the evidence of human history, yet provide varied and prosperous livelihoods. The breadth and depth of historic land use still offers up its story in the landscape of today will not be changed until after full public consultation proposed in the run up to the next Plan review in 2014.

Whilst development pressures, global demands and climate change on land use continue as drivers of change, the quality of life in Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs remains high, with pro-active and sustainable AONB policies and actions in place to support the aspirations of those who live and work here.

Environment

A unique, tranquil and evolving landscape where remote downland contrasts with swathes of ancient woodland and vales. Distinctive local landscapes are conserved and enhanced by those who work and manage the land, nurturing a valued and treasured countryside for future generations. The AONB Partnership works with rural land managers to protect natural resources and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The natural environment, together with villages and hamlets, are the cornerstones of residents' quality of life, where diverse wildlife abounds within sustainably managed habitats linked across the landscape, equally celebrated for its historic and cultural features.

Community

Vibrant and balanced local communities enjoy a good quality of life and tangible community spirit. Villages offer key facilities and services that are accessible and responsive to local needs, whilst employment, training and education opportunities are varied. Sustainable development principles are welcomed by communities, who are mutually supportive and have a strong sense of pride in their area. Local traditions and the qualities and characteristics that make it such an attractive place in which to live are highly valued.

Economy

A diverse, thriving and sustainable rural economy in which agriculture, forestry and tourism are viable sectors enhancing and supporting the distinctive character of the AONB. An appropriately skilled workforce is employed within both traditional and diversified rural enterprises that are exemplars of a lively, prosperous and evolving rural economy.





Plan Structure

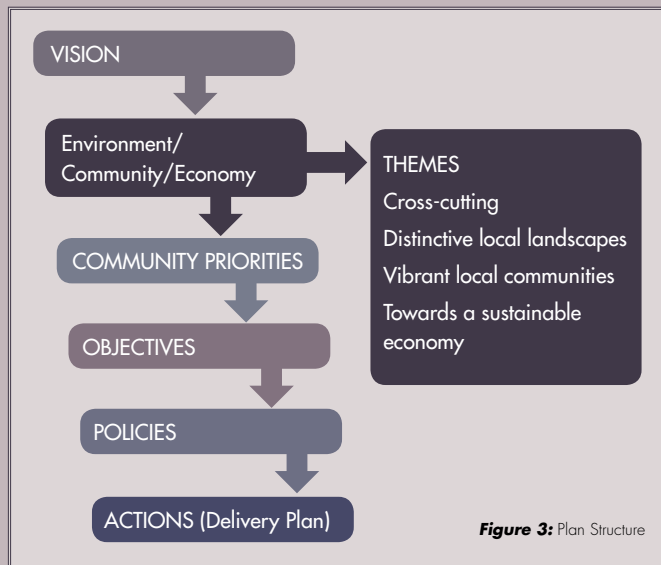
"Encourage a strong feeling of community belonging...
...a sense of place"

Damerham, 15th May 2003

The foundation of the management plan is the 'Vision for 2029' with its' three sub-divisions for environment, community and economy. For management planning purposes, there are some issues that cut across the three subdivisions, giving four themes:

- Cross-cutting
- Distinctive local landscapes
- Vibrant local communities
- Towards a sustainable economy

From these are derived the priorities, objectives and policies.



During the consultation for the 2004 Management Plan seven Community Priorities¹ emerged, drawn from the Vision.

1. Increase levels of awareness and understanding of the AONB;
2. Conserve and enhance the landscape character, habitats, species and tranquillity of the AONB;
3. Conserve and enhance the historic, archaeological and cultural features within their distinctive landscape settings;
4. Support and influence innovative ways of maintaining and providing access to community facilities and services;
5. Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the built environment within its historic, cultural and landscape setting;
6. Promote the management of the impact of traffic on the AONB; and
7. Support the rural economy in ways that are sustainable.

1. In the 2004 Management Plan these Community Priorities were expressed as Aims. The Partnership feels that the term 'Community Priorities' better reflects their origins.

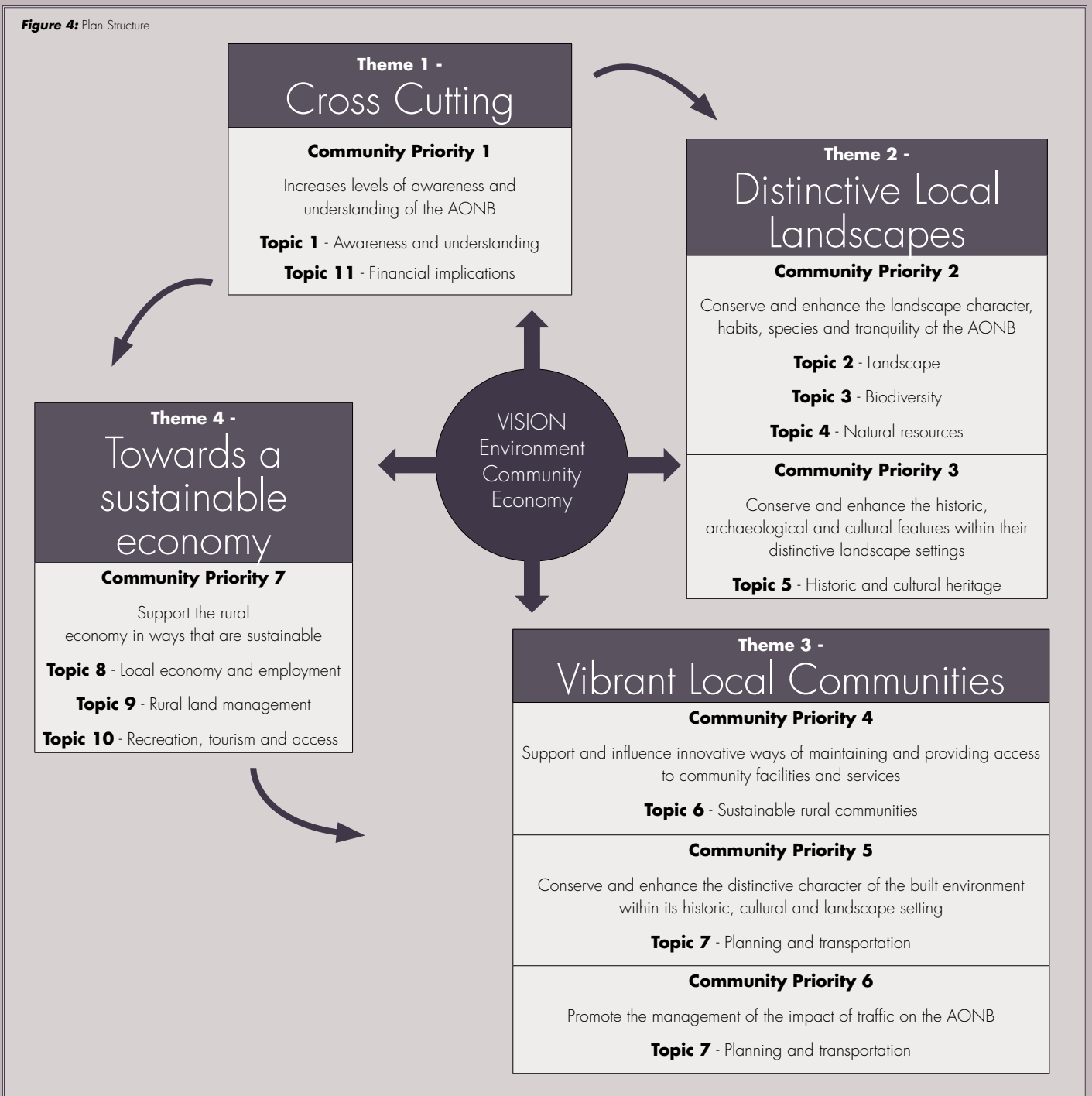


These have been confirmed during the 2008 review process and will remain as relevant aspirations until reviewed in 2014. The Plan is structured around these community priorities grouped under the four themes as shown in Figure 4.

The themes are sub-divided into a series of topics. Each topic includes an overview of the subject, a listing of its special characteristics and the issues to be addressed. This is followed by the objectives and policies that form the core of the Management Plan, setting out how the vision will be achieved.

The objectives are the goals to achieve if the twenty-five year vision for the AONB is to be met. The policies are the means by which the objectives will be achieved during the five-year life of this plan.

The actions required to deliver the policies are shown in a separate document, the Delivery Plan. This provides an annual rolling programme of work.





Policy Context

“Let’s have greater co-operation between parish, district and county councils in the preservation and management of the area”

Longbridge Deverill, 5th June 2003

This is an era of considerable policy evolution. Over the coming years, national and local climate change policy is likely to affect most aspects of daily life, business and methods of land management. Sustainable development will continue to rise in importance.

Agricultural support under the Common Agricultural Policy has been subject to fundamental change, with the cessation of support for agricultural production and movement towards incentives for environmental management. It is likely to change further in the future. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive will require significant changes to land management. Forestry policy now clearly focuses on supporting the wide range of benefits that woodlands can provide with a particular emphasis in this area on the conservation of our ancient woodland resource.

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England has been created as the government agency responsible for conserving and enhancing England's natural environment and raising public understanding and enjoyment of it¹.

As part of sustainable development, Government is placing increasing focus on maintaining mixed and vibrant communities and is strongly committed to making understanding and enjoyment of the countryside accessible to all: the young and old; people with disabilities; people from minority groups; and those from inner cities. This in turn links to agendas for health and education.

Methods of delivering policy are changing too. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, the planning system was reformed and streamlined, with an emphasis on spatial planning. The statutory land use plan, or Development Plan, now consists of a Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). The local planning authorities are producing their LDFs, which comprise a range of statutory Local Development Documents allocating land for development or containing planning policies by which planning applications are determined. Covering the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs are seven LDFs, four Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks, four Local Transport Plans and two Regional Spatial Strategies (the South West and South

East plans). This Management Plan does not form part of the statutory Development Plan for any part of the AONB but, as a statutory document in its own right, should be a material consideration² in the planning process and an instrument for securing consistency across the AONB in planning matters.

This Management Plan takes account of this evolving national, regional and local policy context and seeks to deliver the national, regional and local policies that support the Vision and Priorities for this AONB (see Appendix 4 for a list of relevant policy documents).

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory process. A formal SEA is required for new plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. SEA aims to provide protection of the environment at a strategic level and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Preparation of the SEA has been undertaken in consultation with Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, the local authorities and partner organisations. An Environmental Report has been published along with this plan that assesses its environmental impact. An Environmental Statement has also been published which explains how the plan has been influenced by the SEA process (see Appendix 5 for a list of publications available on the AONB web site).

Habitat Regulations Assessment

The Partnership has undertaken and published an Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA and formerly known as an Appropriate Assessment) of the potential impact of the objectives of the Management Plan on the conservation objectives of sites of European importance for nature conservation affected by the plan, as required by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Natural England has confirmed that the assessment complies with the legislative requirements.

An **Equality Impact Assessment** was also carried out as required.

1. Natural England was formed by merging of the Rural Development Agency, English Nature and a part of the Countryside Agency (the Commission for Rural Communities also acquired some of the Countryside Agency's duties).

2. Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the South East Plan 'Within the AONBs statutory Management Plans provide a policy and action framework which should influence and help determine planning, decision making, advice and resource allocation priorities for local authorities, government agencies and statutory undertakers. In particular, they should provide an underpinning for the development of AONB specific policy in Local Development Frameworks'.



Theme 1 - Cross Cutting

"A prosperous farming community will manage the land well"

Bowerchalke, 28th April 2003

Background

Three interlinked overarching external ‘forces for change’ are likely to impact significantly on the landscapes and special qualities of the AONB:

- pressures from development, changing lifestyles and transportation;
- the effects of globalisation on agricultural land use; and
- climate change and our response to it.

The implications are introduced in this section but the responses are set out under the appropriate topics in each theme.

The AONB is an unrivalled educational and recreational resource for both specialists and the casually inquisitive. It offers many exciting opportunities for low key, small scale tourism that could benefit the rural economy, whilst increasing awareness and understanding.

There are financial implications arising from the aims and objectives of this Management Plan. These are considered on pages 60 and 61.

Community Priority 1: *Increase levels of awareness and understanding of the AONB*

Topics:

- Forces for change
- Awareness and understanding
- Financial implications

FORCES FOR CHANGE

1 - Pressures from development, changing lifestyles and transportation.

The UK population is projected to increase by 10% (5 million) by 2026¹. Of this, a 750,000 increase is expected to be in the South West Region². (Similar increases are expected in the South East.) People are living longer and the average size of households is decreasing with more single occupancy. Much of the increase in population in rural areas is the result of migration for lifestyle reasons, including retirement. The scale of development required to provide housing, employment and services to

this expanding population will be considerable.³

The towns and cities which surround the AONB are all expected to accommodate significant housing and employment development in the next 20 years.

Whilst housing and employment development within the villages of the AONB is likely to address only local needs, market towns such as Shaftesbury and Wimborne can be expected to accommodate significant new development.

The increasing demand for quicker journey times between employment centres may lead to pressure for road widening and other ‘improvement’ schemes on roads in the AONB.

Increased prosperity enjoyed by some people leads to other environmental impacts such as; more over-flights by aircraft of all kinds; the use of roads and rights of way for motorised leisure pursuits; and a demand for second homes.

Unless effectively managed, all of these pressures will work individually and cumulatively to impact adversely on both the landscape character and special qualities of the area. The Partnership’s role is to ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the landscape is a key issue, effectively addressed in strategies and plans produced by other agencies.

This is taken forward in Planning and Transportation (pages 46 - 48, Objective K) with a call for a robust framework of strategies and plans to be in place to secure only appropriate development in and around the AONB. These must contribute to the social and economic well-being of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs whilst conserving and enhancing its distinctive character and enabling greater understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

2 - Globalisation of agriculture

The landscape of the AONB is dominated by farmland and woodland, and changes in these land uses have a major influence on the natural beauty of the area. The reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the introduction of new agri-environment schemes in the UK are affecting farming, with a greater emphasis on wildlife conservation. The de-coupling of support payments from production is requiring farmers to respond more readily to world market conditions. Fluctuations in commodity prices and input costs

1. Office for National Statistics, 2001.

2. Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy 2006.

3. Housing allocation is set by the Regional Spatial Strategy. A significant increase in new dwellings is proposed following the examination in public, with significant growth for Wimborne Minister. This would bring development close to the AONB boundary, with potential impacts upon its setting.



are making future arable profitability hard to predict but livestock farming, which is crucial to the management of special habitats like chalk grassland, has been in decline for some time.

The long term decline in the market for UK timber has had a pronounced effect on the area's woodlands, with many suffering from a lack of management. The ageing beech woodlands no longer produce significant volumes of timber and are more valuable as places for recreation than as a productive part of the rural economy. The promotion of wood as a renewable fuel may stimulate improved management of some woodlands.

The AONB Partnership will encourage appropriate, multiple use of agricultural and forestry land to provide benefits for all in ways that are sustainable. This is taken forward in Rural Land Management (pages 53 - 57 , Objectives Q and S) with a call for the potential impacts of globalisation on land use and biodiversity and natural resources to be identified and a strategic response to be in place to secure the conservation and enhancement of landscape character by 2014. Objective F (Natural Resources) and Policy C3 (Landscape) echo this call, which reflects the need for an integrated approach across a number of sectors.

3 - Climate change

A changing global climate, principally caused by the activities of man, is now regarded as an indisputable fact by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP)⁴, the Government and local authorities. How much global temperatures will rise and how quickly are still under debate. There is a broad consensus on the likely changes to the climate of Southern England, and therefore the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, over the next few decades. These changes will be gradual and may not be noticeable within the life of this plan but strategies are needed now because of the long lead-in time for actions to be effective.

The likely changes are:

- summers will become warmer and drier
- winters will become milder and wetter
- extreme weather conditions will become more frequent

These changes have the potential to affect the landscapes, wildlife and communities of the AONB and are taken forward in Landscape (pages 27 - 31 , Objective C).

Woodlands may be dominated by oak and ash which cope better than beech with the likely changes in climate. The range of crops grown by farmers will change and there may be more growing of bio-fuels. Water flows in rivers and streams could become more erratic. Habitats may expand, contract or migrate. New species may enter the area, some bringing disease or pests that 'native' species are not immune to. Tourism pressures could increase as more people decide to holiday in the UK. All of these factors would affect which flora and fauna can flourish in the area.

Mitigation for climate change in the AONB

Mitigation requires the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, from whatever source that can be managed.

Mitigation measures include:

- Better on-farm management of fertilizer and animal waste.
- Increased reliance on renewable energies, biomass heating from local fuel stocks and appropriately scaled renewable energy generation.
- Enhanced domestic and commercial energy efficiency.
- Greater availability of alternative fuels for cars, commercial vehicles and plant machinery e.g. batteries, LPG, bio-fuels.
- Improved availability and accessibility of sustainable modes of transport (bus services, cycling).
- Greater use of timber in construction from sustainable woodland.
- Carbon capture as an objective of habitat creation and management of woodlands.

Adapting to climate change

Changing our behaviour to respond to the impacts of climate change is known as 'adaptation'. Adaptation measures include:

- Encouraging simple greenhouse gas and carbon accounting to monitor the effectiveness of changes.
- Dissemination of advice on bio-security and disease control in domestic and wild animals.
- Modelling groundwater response to climate change as a part of planning policy development.
- Increasing measures to manage the risk of flooding.

4. The UKCIP web site as the authoritative source for scientifically sound research and government policy. www.ukcip.org.uk

- Securing future water resources by water storage and transfer schemes that reduce abstraction.
- Encouraging water efficiency in homes and businesses and encouraging reuse.
- Linking fragmented habitats to improve opportunities for species migration and population stabilisation.

Next steps

By the time this Management Plan is reviewed in 2014, the likely impacts of climate change on the character of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB should have been identified. The AONB Partnership will encourage organisations, businesses and individuals to consider the implications of climate change upon their operations and aspirations. A strategic response will need to be developed that includes a comprehensive programme of measures to mitigate the effects of and adapt to the consequences of climate change. This is taken forward in Landscape (pages 27 - 31, Objective C).

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Community Priority 1:

Increase levels of awareness and understanding of the AONB

Overview

Since the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the requirement to publish a management plan, there has been a heightened awareness of the designation, purpose, and the benefits the AONB can bring to the environment, economy and the people who live and work in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs. Listening to local people, hearing what makes the area special for them and how they would like to see the AONB evolve has started a dialogue that needs to continue.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty⁵. At the national level, the National Association of AONBs works to ensure that the Government is aware of AONB needs and concerns when formulating policies and legislation. Regionally, the South West, and South East, Protected Landscapes Forums strive to ensure regional agencies and bodies take full account of AONBs and National Parks when developing strategies and policies. This AONB is involved in all these organisations and takes the opportunity for a local input to the ongoing management of these national assets.

For a decade after designation, the wider profile of this AONB was low. The quintessential qualities that led to its designation have been recognised and valued for many years. Local people and visitors alike have appreciated and treasured its stunning landscapes, panoramic views, peace and quiet, wildlife, historic and cultural riches and deeply rural nature for centuries. The task now is to widen appreciation of the area's needs and aspirations.

The AONB covers a large area (981 square kilometres), deeply rural and sparsely populated with widely scattered villages and hamlets. Parishes, local communities, schools and interest groups all need to be kept in touch with developments and initiatives which affect their AONB. Expanding market towns sit around the periphery and they, together with the much wider business community, must be kept aware of the AONB, its vision and aims for the future. Visitors from further afield enjoy the fantastic landscapes

5. PPS7 paragraph 21

and revel in the area's sense of peace and tranquillity. Each time they visit they take away new memories and a new message about the AONB's many special qualities.

Partnership promotion of the AONB

- The Annual Forum brings together around 100 people drawn from the Partnership Panel, local community and interest groups, individuals and the parishes to consider AONB matters.
- The AONB team is a point of contact to Government, the SW and SE region, Local Authorities, NGO's, voluntary groups and agencies as well as all AONB parishes and communities
- A network of Parish Partners act as ambassadors, providing a 'local' link for communities wishing to access AONB information.
- Twice a year, 14,000 households, local businesses, community shops and libraries each receive a copy of 'The Hart', the AONB newspaper.
- The AONB web site provides a wealth of AONB related information such as the Management Plan, maps and commissioned studies and is now also used to promote local produce, event and attraction information.
- The AONB Partnership has published reports, guides, leaflets and fact sheets on a range of topics.
- The AONB Team attends various events and fairs, increasing awareness of the AONB and its purpose locally.
- The Sustainable Development Fund and AONB Local Action Fund are both utilised to support community inspired projects that bring environmental, community and economic benefits to the area.

Special characteristics

- The AONB is an inspirational area with a wealth of visual, natural, historical and cultural characteristics.
- The diverse, distinctive and often unique elements that comprise the AONB are also a valuable educational resource.
- The AONB is a large area with a sparse population and scattered settlements.
- The many and varied special qualities of the area have been recognised and valued by local people and visitors for many years.

Key issues

Value for money - The Government needs to secure multiple benefits from its use of public funds. The role of the AONB in delivering such benefits needs explanation and promotion. The links between the productive use of land and maintenance of high quality landscapes that support biodiversity, lock up carbon, help ensure clean supplies of water as well as providing places for leisure and recreation show that the area is capable of providing such multiple benefits.

AONB profile - Although there are good examples of site specific information and interpretation, there are relatively few AONB-wide messages or themed interpretation to be found. The challenge is to increase the awareness of the AONB and the understanding of how the AONB's special qualities can be 'conserved and enhanced' in a sustainable way. There is a concern amongst some residents that any increase in information about the AONB will attract more attention to it and potentially lead to an increase in visitors, eroding the tranquillity valued so highly by local communities.

OBJECTIVES

A	The distinctive characteristics of the AONB are understood, valued and supported by all.
B	Strategic and local decisions are guided by a full awareness and understanding of the landscape designation and purposes.

POLICIES

A1	a) Promote awareness and understanding of all aspects of the AONB designation, purposes and management, including the role of traditional industries. b) Promote awareness and understanding of all aspects of the AONB to young people in particular.
A2	Promote best practice that focuses on conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB.
B1	Develop position statements, fact sheets and good practice notes to inform decision makers at all levels on issues affecting the AONB.
B2	Promote AONB aims and objectives to relevant decision makers both within and from outside the AONB.



Theme 2 - Distinctive Local Landscapes

“Place names to treasure - ‘Pugs Hole’, ‘Patties Bottom’, and ‘Cow Down’ ”

Bowerchalke, 28th April 2003

Background

The underlying geology, topography and dominant vegetation are major contributors to the structure and the aesthetic aspects of landscapes. These have combined with cultural, historic, social and economic influences over centuries to create the unique and distinctive character of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. This is an area of great diversity and contrast. The night sky and seasonal changes inspire residents and visitors alike. Further details are contained in two major reports published by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB; the Integrated Landscape Characterisation and the Historic Landscape Characterisation.

Community Priority 2:

Conserve and enhance the landscape character, habitats, species and tranquillity of the AONB

Community Priority 3:

Conserve and enhance the historic, archaeological and cultural features within their distinctive landscape settings

Topics:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Natural resources
- Historic and cultural heritage

LANDSCAPE

Overview

The European Landscape Convention¹ has defined landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. This definition reflects the understanding that landscapes evolve through time, as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings. It also underlines that a landscape forms a whole where the natural and cultural components are taken together, not separately.

Landscapes change daily and seasonally, they respond to the weather, some have a greater proportion of hard and constructed elements whilst in others the soft and semi-natural predominate. They are perceived and valued in different ways by individuals and communities. It is with

1. See page 8



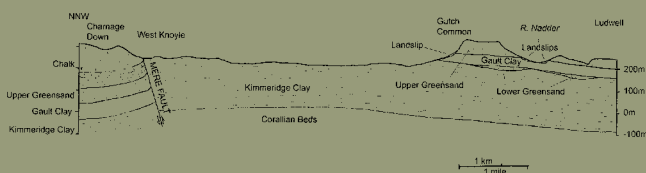


this definition in mind that the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Partnership approaches the task of enhancing and conserving the landscape.

Geology and Geomorphology

This part of Southern and Central England was covered by the sea between 200 million years ago until the end of the Chalk period (around 65 million years ago). The oldest rocks in the AONB are a small outcrop of Corallian Beds at Zeals (150 million years ago) and a wide outcrop of the Kimmeridge Clay (140 million years ago) across the western half of the Vale of Wardour. Farther east the Kimmeridge Clay is overlain by the sandy limestones of the Portland beds and overlying them the clays and limestones of the Purbeck beds. Either side of the Vale these older rocks are covered by the Gault Clay, then the Upper Greensand and finally the Chalk (these latter formations forming the sides and eastern end of the Vale).

The Chalk is formed out of microscopic remains of marine plankton that gradually accumulated on a slowly subsiding sea floor over a period of 20 million years, finally reaching a thickness of around 250 metres. The purer Upper Chalk contains layers and nodules of flint (pure silica derived by the accumulation of siliceous organisms on the sea floor). Around 65 million years ago, the Chalk was uplifted above sea level and suffered a degree of erosion before being covered by the sands and clays of the Tertiary Period, now completely removed from the area of the AONB but still present farther east. Around 20 million years ago another period of uplift created the folding and faulting of the rocks which started the development of the present landscape. Most dramatically, an east-west trending elongated dome split and gave rise to the Vale of Wardour. The Mere Fault, Wiltshire's most important structure, developed on the northern edge of the dome.



By kind permission of Isobel Geddes, 'Hidden Depths'.
Wiltshire Geology Group, geddes@wiltshiregeologygroup.freemove.co.uk



Please refer to **Map 4** in the accompanying guide

During successive glaciations of the last 2 million years, when the porous chalk was frozen into an impermeable state, rivers followed faults in the rock and eroded the valleys and steep scarp slopes. The dry valleys and

folded landform of the Downs we see today date from this period. The rivers cut down through the chalk to expose the Greensand and Kimmeridge Clay of the Vale of Wardour and the Chilmark Stone that was used to build Salisbury Cathedral. The building materials derived from the rocks give a local character to various areas; notably the stone villages built of the famous Chilmark and Tisbury freestones from the Portland strata; the sandstones in the Upper Greensand; flints in the chalk areas; and bricks from the local clays. One of the most important features of the landscape of the AONB is the underlying influence of the chalk, not only on the topography, flora and fauna, but on the pattern of human activity and settlement.

Landscape Character Assessment

An 'Integrated Landscape Character Assessment' for the AONB was completed in 2003. It built upon earlier work from 1995 and helps produce a more complete picture of what makes the area so 'outstanding'.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies local landscape features, the broad character of a locality, indigenous materials and all the other elements that contribute to the particular sense of place. LCA therefore presents an integrated view of the landscape and includes all the features which contribute to the special and distinctive character of the AONB. The AONB Landscape Character Assessment brings together a number of different studies including the socio-economics of the AONB, the agricultural character, an historical overview, recreational features, ecological characteristics, and visual information based on survey work conducted in the field. It plays a crucial part in enabling the AONB Partnership to conserve and enhance the AONB. Details are posted on the AONB web site and a summary booklet is available. With the publication of the Historic Landscape Characterisation in 2008, the issues and trends highlighted in the 1995 LCA now need to be re-assessed.

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs is an area of great diversity and contrast, represented by the definition of eight Landscape Types. These range from the high open remote downlands, the ancient forests and woodland of Cranborne Chase and the dramatic steep escarpment slopes, to the more intimate and secluded chalk river valleys with their distinctive pattern of settlement. Each of these landscape types have been further sub-divided into fifteen geographically specific Landscape Character Areas.



Please refer to **Map 5** in the accompanying guide



Special characteristics

- Simple and elemental character of the open downland - wide expansive skies, dominant skylines, dramatic escarpments and panoramic views.
- Unity of the underlying chalk expressed in the distinctive and sometimes dramatically sculpted landforms, open vistas, escarpments and coombes.
- A peaceful, tranquil, deeply rural area - largely 'unspoilt' and maintained as a living agricultural landscape.
- Strong sense of remoteness with expanses of dark night skies.
- Combination and contrast of the open exposed downland incised by intimate settled valleys and vales.
- The landscape character of the AONB is clearly read and appreciated by non experts.
- The very scale of the landscape is often grand and dramatic with the 'intensity' of landscape character almost palpable.
- A landscape etched with the imprint of the past – visible historic features including prehistoric earthworks, hill forts, field systems and water meadows together with the special landscapes associated with the former royal hunting grounds.
- Sparsely populated with absence of any large-scale settlement - reinforcing the rurality of AONB communities and sense of place.
- Distinctive settlement pattern along the valleys and vales, and small medieval villages along the scarp spring line. Local vernacular building styles include the chequer pattern of knapped flint, clunch, and straw thatch.
- Overlain by a woodland mosaic - including the eye-catching hill-top copses, veteran parkland trees and avenues, extensive areas of wooded downland and ancient forest together with more recent game coverts.
- Rich ecological character – expressed in the diversity of habitats including the distinctive herb-rich chalk downland, clear fast flowing chalk streams and rivers, ancient and calcareous woodlands and rare chalk heath and water meadows
- Legacy of historic Halls and Houses with their characteristic estate and parkland landscapes contributing important designed and visual elements.
- Strong sense of place and local distinctiveness represented by the use of local building materials and small-scale vernacular features such as the sunken lanes and distinctive black and white signposts.

Key issues²

Issues affecting the landscape are often inter-related and are described in more detail throughout the other sections of this plan. The issues and threats facing each Landscape Character Type within the AONB are summarised on pages 63 - 67. The headline issues are:

Sense of place - Small-scale local, specific features that form a distinct sense of place are being replaced by the use of standard designs and materials in developments and highway works, eroding local character and distinctiveness.

Roads and traffic - Noise pollution, size and speed of vehicles, damage to rural lanes and the potential visual intrusion of proposed improvement schemes such as excessive signs, road markings, and street furniture, can seriously detract from the rural character of the AONB, leading to significant losses of local distinctiveness and tranquillity.

Condition of landscape character areas - Some characteristic landscape features are deteriorating due, for example, to harsh edges from coniferous plantations or fragmented hedgerows.

Landscape character sensitivity - A study completed in 2007 evaluated the landscape character areas for both landscape and visual sensitivity. The distinctiveness of the AONB's landscape character is sensitive to changes in the area's appearance. There is a lack of awareness regarding AONB landscape character sensitivity that may lead to inappropriate development and land management schemes and policies.

Future trends affecting landscape character:

Fundamental changes in the agricultural economy - 82% of the AONB is farmland. Changes to the Common Agricultural Policy will drive land managers' decisions and, if activities change, there may be significant visual impacts within the AONB.

Development pressures – These, particularly for residential development and tall structures (such as wind turbines), threaten the special and perceptual sense of rurality, remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies.

Social and economic drivers of change - The AONB is a living landscape. As people's needs and

aspirations change then there may be impacts on the landscape. The area is characterised as having an aging population and their priorities may be different from those working in or commuting from the AONB. Visitor preferences may change.

Climate change - Changes to climate will have an impact on the characteristic habitats and species of the AONB but the detailed effects are still uncertain. Natural England has studied the area³ and each local authority is preparing a climate change report and there is a need to derive an AONB focused perspective from this work.

OBJECTIVES

C	The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the AONB and its settings are conserved and enhanced.
D	The landscape character and special qualities of the AONB are fully understood, informing and incorporated within effective landscape management and planning.

POLICIES

C1	Encourage, support and analyse research on the impacts of the 'Forces for Change' on the AONB and its surroundings.
C2	Prepare and publish a Climate Change (Mitigation and Adaptation) Action Plan in consultation with those involved in the management of the AONB by the end of this plan period.
C3	Encourage the development of policy and grant aid packages which support sustainable land management that conserves and enhances the identified special qualities of the AONB.
C4	Identify areas and/or features where landscape character or quality has been or is being lost and encourage enhancement measures.
C5	Encourage the identification of factors that contribute to, or detract from, tranquillity in order to effectively conserve and enhance high levels of tranquillity.
D1	Develop landscape management guidance which collates and interprets information from the AONB Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Sensitivity Study and Historic Landscape Characterisation.
D2	Maintain an appropriate and effective record of the presence and condition of the AONB's visual, natural, historical and cultural resource through collation of external sources of data or surveying.

See also biodiversity, rural land management, natural resources, planning and transportation, local rural economy, sustainable rural communities, awareness and understanding

2. The issues and challenges facing each character type are considered from page 63

3. Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase Character Area Climate Change Impact Assessment and Response Strategy, 2008, Natural England

BIODIVERSITY

Overview

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB lies within two of Natural England's defined 'Natural Areas': Wessex Vales and South Wessex Downs. The Wessex Vales Natural Area covers the north-west corner of the AONB and supports a variety of habitats from wet woodland and acid woodland to calcareous and neutral meadows. The South Wessex Downs Natural Area covers the vast majority of the remaining area and is strongly characterised by the underlying chalk. It is internationally renowned for its chalk grassland and rivers.

The AONB holds remnants of once extensive unimproved chalk grassland.



Please refer to **Map 6** in the accompanying guide

This uncommon habitat holds a huge diversity of plant and invertebrate species. The chalk streams are biologically rich and also support an established sport fishing industry. A significant proportion of the woodland is of ancient origin but many have been replanted with non-native species or their management has lapsed. The area contains some of the best aggregations of ancient trees in Europe, supporting internationally rare species of invertebrate and fungi⁴.

The largest farmed land use is the arable fields dotted with typically small woodlands. Rare arable plants and several declining bird species occur in the arable habitats. The most significant change to agriculture has been the intensification of production in recent decades, resulting in a reduction of wild arable plants and a decline in several bird species.

Many species of wildlife still suffer from the technological improvements in arable farming that took place during 1945-1984. The wild flora of cereals experienced a combined loss of abundance and diversity of 82%, with many rare species lost. Plant bugs, grass sawflies, grasshoppers, Lepidoptera and many other insects decreased accordingly, causing, in turn, a shortage of food for the grey partridge, corn bunting, skylark, lapwing and several other species. UK research shows how these adverse effects can be overcome by unsprayed conservation headlands and beetle banks with associated wild bird seed mixtures, measures that are all now supported by government grants and known as 'in-field

options'. However, research commissioned by this AONB⁵ shows that 40% of environmental stewardship expenditure in the AONB (£669,000) is linked to options associated with hedgerow and grassland management, while only 12% of the agri-environment scheme expenditure is on arable farmland (by far the majority of the AONB). The most effective biodiversity options are the least popular with farmers. The system needs modifying so that farmers take up these least popular options, a view also promoted by Plantlife and the British Trust for Ornithology.

Key habitats within the AONB

The Government identifies biodiversity as a key headline indicator of environmental sustainability in the current Public Service Agreement 28: 'Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future' and has agreed a new National Indicator (NI 197)⁶ – 'Improved Local Biodiversity - the proportion of Local Sites⁷ where active conservation management is being achieved'. A key biodiversity indicator is change in the abundance of wild bird breeding populations. The AONB is a major partner in the South West Farmland Bird Initiative, a significant project that seeks to safeguard and expand populations of farmland bird species. There are three chalk grassland projects underway in the AONB that, if coordinated, could present the AONB as a showcase for chalk grassland restoration and enhancement work.

The AONB features in the Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) that cover each of the four counties (see figure 5)⁸. These are a mechanism for achieving species and habitat enhancement. 'Rebuilding Biodiversity in the South West'⁹ is a regional project to prioritise areas where the benefits and opportunities for habitat restoration are greatest. The AONB Partnership played an active part in the determination of priority areas and this has been taken on board in the South West Regional Spatial Strategy.

5. 'Strengthening Landscape Character through Entry Level Stewardship', Dr Jemma Batten, Black Sheep Countryside Management August 2008
6. NI 197: Managed by Defra, the indicator measures the performance of local authorities for biodiversity by assessing the implementation of positive conservation management of Local Sites.
7. Local Sites have many names, for example they include Sites of Nature Conservation Importance; Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation; County Wildlife Sites; Regionally Important Geological Sites.
8. LBAP reference is www.ukbap.org.uk
9. Rebuilding Biodiversity in the South West reference is www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map

4. Ancient tree Forum - www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum

Examples of Biodiversity Action Plan species within the AONB	
Corn bunting	Early gentian
Grey partridge	Adonis blue butterfly
Skylark	Duke of Burgundy butterfly
Stone curlew	Marsh fritillary butterfly
Tree sparrow	Brown hare
Turtle dove	Greater horseshoe bat
Water vole	Otter

Figure 5: Examples of Biodiversity Action Plan species within the AONB

International and national nature conservation designations within the AONB:



Please refer to **Map 7** in the accompanying guide

- Five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Three National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and
- Fifty seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (including eight geological sites).

These designations cover 3,413.2 hectares, or 3.5% of the AONB. Natural England reports that 41% of the SSSI land is in favourable condition for wildlife and that a further 36.4% of the land is recovering following the introduction of focused management prescriptions (Figure 6).

SSSI CONDITION	Number of sites or part thereof *	Area (hectares)	Percentage of total area
Favourable	38	1,398.1	41
Unfavourable (Recovering)	21	1,241.7	36.4
Unfavourable (No Change)	21	257.6	7.5
Unfavourable (Declining)	16	483.9	14
Not Assessed	1	31.8	0.9

* Total number of SSSIs in the AONB is less than the sum of SSSIs of different conditions. This is because some SSSIs are separated into areas of different condition and each area is counted separately. Therefore "Number" for each condition is number of whole or part SSSIs.

Figure 6: Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the AONB





Local non-statutory nature conservation sites within the AONB:

- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (Dorset);
- Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (Hampshire);
- County Wildlife Sites (Wiltshire and Somerset); or
- Regionally Important Geological Sites.

The AONB contains 519 of these sites, amounting to 9,155 hectares of land locally important for nature conservation (just over 9% of the AONB).

A rich diversity of woodland types is represented within the AONB and the most ecologically diverse are the ancient semi-natural woodlands, of which there is a significant proportion in the Cranborne Chase Landscape Character Area 3A¹⁰.



Please refer to **Map 8** in the accompanying guide

Special characteristics

- An ecologically diverse area.
- Rolling downland, river valleys, woodlands and wetlands.
- Internationally important chalk grassland and rivers supporting rare wildlife.
- Extensive tracts of arable land supporting some rare arable plants.
- Main geological features are chalk plateaux, scarp and dip slopes, clay with flint deposits and valleys – both dry and occupied by rivers and streams.

Key issues

Habitat and species decline

Chalk grassland - A priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The cover of lowland calcareous grassland has suffered a sharp decline in extent over the last 50 years. There are no comprehensive figures but a sample of chalk sites in England surveyed in 1966 and 1980 showed a 20% loss in that period and an assessment of chalk grassland in Dorset found that over 50% had been lost between the mid-1950s and the early 1990s. This AONB now supports 14% of the national total. Nationally rare plants include the early gentian, tuberous thistle, dwarf sedge and bastard toadflax. There are internationally

important populations of the marsh fritillary and silver spotted skipper butterflies.

Decline in bird populations - A key national biodiversity indicator is the abundance of wild bird breeding populations. While the AONB is still a stronghold for farmland birds in particular, most of them have declined by between 15 and 30% since 1994. The Farmland Bird Indicator is made up from the trends of 19 widespread farmland bird species and is used by Government to assess the success of its policies for conserving wildlife. The apparent levelling-off of the indicator since 1999 suggests that the decline in farmland birds has been halted, but it is too early to tell whether this recent turn-around represents the start of a sustained population recovery. Our work to conserve Farmland Birds Species in the AONB is of national significance.

Decline in livestock farming – Flower rich grasslands are not a natural state. Woodland species will grow and dominate the habitat unless they are regularly kept in check by cutting or grazing. Chalk grassland conservation relies on the availability of suitable grazing animals, especially traditional breeds of sheep and cattle, to maintain a low sward. The AONB Partnership is, amongst others, working with the Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and RSPB to address chalk grassland conservation and restoration at a landscape scale.

Land management practices – Inappropriate management regimes have led to the loss of unimproved grasslands and ancient woodlands during the last few decades.

Fragmentation of habitats - There is now a fragmentation of habitats with isolated wildlife communities that may not be able to respond to climate changes. There is a need for coordinated management with surrounding natural environments to create viable habitat corridors to allow species to respond to climate change.

Invasive non-native species – Species such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, Rhododendron and American signal crayfish are increasingly common in the AONB and are displacing local flora and fauna and reducing biodiversity.

Funding issues

The main public investments in landscape-scale management are through Single Farm Payments, Environmental Stewardship and the England Woodland

10. See the Landscape Character Assessment

Grant schemes¹¹. The AONB should be treated as a priority area. There is a need for consistent recording and monitoring of the impacts the implementation of these schemes has on the AONB's biodiversity.

OBJECTIVES

E	Characteristic habitats and species are conserved and enhanced at a landscape scale.
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POLICIES

E1	Encourage the conservation and enhancement of habitats and species by extending and improving ecological connections between habitats at an appropriate landscape scale.
E2	Support partnerships that work to conserve, enhance and connect sites and areas of high biodiversity value within the AONB.
E3	Support action to control invasive non-native species within the AONB.
E4	Endeavour to determine availability of baseline biodiversity data across the AONB to help monitor the outcomes of land management work.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Overview

There is a growing understanding and development of long-term natural resource management planning at all levels of government. Natural resources are the essential elements of the natural environment. The pressures on these finite resources, such as air, soil, water and minerals, are greater today than ever. The increased demand for water, building development, agricultural production, and a constant supply of energy, have all contributed to their degradation. In recognition of their fundamental importance, natural resources are the focus for long term planning, such as the Environment Agency's Water Services Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans, which the Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs AONB Partnership will work with partners to deliver.



Please refer to **Map 9** in the accompanying guide

In government guidance there is a clear expectation that the protected landscapes of England will make a strong contribution to both the local delivery of sustainable development and its wider promotion. In this context, the environment can be likened to a major public service that benefits us every day. The protected landscapes of England

form the pinnacles of this service, delivering a wide range of benefits essential for human survival and well-being, sometimes referred to as 'ecosystem services'¹², that seeks to deliver:

- the conservation of landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and local ways of life;
- food and fresh water;
- the capturing of carbon;
- spiritual refreshment and inspiration;
- recreation;
- public health and
- education.

Special characteristics

- Clear water supporting sensitive fish and other aquatic species
- Chilmark and Greensand stone deposits
- High open downlands with abundant Rights of Way, ancient droves and trackways
- Far reaching panoramic views
- Semi natural woodland, both forest and coppice, together with plantation woodlands
- Dark night skies
- Cultural footprints through the ages visible throughout the landscape

Key issues

Sustainable development - This is concerned with achieving a physical and natural environment that is protected and enhanced, where natural resources and energy are used as efficiently as possible; an economy that is innovative and productive with high levels of employment, and a society that promotes social inclusion and personal well-being. Living within environmental limits is a pre-requisite for the future. Working within environmental limits means not reaching a stage where the environment can no longer recover naturally, nor destroying those aspects of the environment that are finite or cannot be recreated.

Light pollution - Two national datasets showing light pollution are available from 1993 and 2000 which demonstrate the spread of light pollution across the AONB

11. See Figure 10 and 'Strengthening Landscape Character through Entry Level Stewardship', Dr Jemma Batten, Black Sheep Countryside Management August 2008

12. For further information on ecosystems services see 'Securing a healthy natural environment - An action plan for embedding an ecosystems approach', Defra, 2007 www.Defra.gov.uk/wildlifecountryside/natres/pdf/eco_actionplan.pdf

and the general loss of dark night skies¹³. Contributory factors are street and highway lighting, and the sideways and upward dispersion of light from a variety of sources.

Diffuse pollution - Diffuse sources of pollution include run-off from roads, houses and commercial areas, run-off from farmland, and seepage into groundwater from developed landscapes of all kinds. Diffuse sources are often individually minor but collectively significant. Increases in nutrient levels can result in toxic algal blooms, resulting in adverse impacts on the food chain which supports fish, animals and birds. Agriculture is one of the main sources of diffuse pollution and Defra¹⁴ wishes to encourage Catchment Sensitive Farming¹⁵ - managing land in a way that is sensitive to the ecological health of the water environment. Farming is not the sole cause of these problems, but it does contribute approximately 60% of nitrates, 25% of phosphorus and 70% of sediments entering our waters, amongst other pollutants.

Renewable energy - There is an increased demand for renewable energy. Developments must harmonise with the character of the area and inappropriate developments, such as visually intrusive wind turbines, should not be sited within the AONB boundary, its setting or impair significant views from it. Options for the AONB to help meet local energy needs on a scale that can be accommodated within the landscape include:

- wood-fuelled heating and hot water systems,
- micro-hydro electricity generation,
- on-farm bio-digestion,
- active solar and
- photovoltaics.

Waste - An essential part of the sustainable management of our natural resources is the need to reduce waste. In its Waste Strategy 2007 the Government sets out waste management practices through a 'waste hierarchy': Reduction; Re-use; Recovery (including recycling, composting and energy recovery); and Safe and Environmentally Sound Disposal, with landfill and other disposal methods used as a last resort. Local authorities

within the AONB Partnership all have domestic waste reduction targets. Wiltshire Council has a target to reduce municipal waste by 40% by 2011 and by 50% by 2020¹⁶. Dorset County Council has a target of 60% by 2016¹⁷.

Mineral extraction - The AONB has a long history of providing local building materials, mainly from greensand and sandy limestone (Chilmark stone). The need to safeguard local identity and distinctiveness through the use of local materials to strengthen the local vernacular should be balanced against the disruption, visual and other impacts resulting from the extraction of materials to achieve this.

OBJECTIVES

F	The AONB Partnership and other stakeholders work together to secure the sustainable future of natural resources within and around the AONB.
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POLICIES

F1	The exploitation of natural resources is managed so as to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.
F2	Reduce carbon emissions from activities within the AONB by applying energy conservation measures and encouraging more sustainable patterns of development.
F3	Support renewable energy generation by technologies that integrate with the landscape character, are neither visually intrusive nor harmful to wildlife, and are of an appropriate scale to their location and siting.
F4	Less waste is produced through both waste minimisation and recycling of waste materials generated by residents and visitors, construction and redevelopment, agriculture and tourism providers. Any residual waste is disposed of where there is no harm to the distinctive characteristics of the AONB.
F5	Promote good practice that encourages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable utilisation of soil • avoidance of direct pollution • avoidance of soil erosion • measures to reduce diffuse pollution

13. www.cpre.org.uk and go to Campaigns, Landscape

14. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/environment/water/csf/index.htm>

15. Defra - "Catchment Sensitive Farming is land management that keeps diffuse emissions of pollutants to levels consistent with the ecological sensitivity and uses of rivers, groundwaters and other aquatic habitats, both in the immediate catchment and further downstream. It includes managing appropriately the use of fertilisers, manures and pesticides; promoting good soil structure and rain infiltration to avoid run-off and erosion; protecting watercourses from faecal contamination, sedimentation and pesticides; reducing stocking density; managing stock on farms to avoid compaction and poaching of land; and separating clean and dirty water on farms".

16. Wiltshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2006 - Wiltshire County Council

17. Dorset Municipal Waste Strategy 2003 – Dorset County Council



HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Overview

The countryside we see today is an expression of the interaction between people and the landscape over the millennia. Every part of the landscape has a history and this is a major component that contributes to the special landscapes of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The landscapes of the AONB bear the imprint of successive eras of human activity and settlement. This is one of the richest and most closely studied parts of prehistoric Wessex, the haunt of General Pitt-Rivers, Heywood Sumner, Richard Bradley and Martin Green.

The medieval hunting grounds of Cranborne Chase and the wealth of deer parks, such as Harbin's Park, were set within a medieval world of commons, strip fields, and ancient woodlands, the last cut into by tiny assarts. Post medieval planned enclosure and the creation of new large scale fields in the 20th century, have reduced the extent of the surviving ancient landscapes transforming some areas of the AONB. The 18th and 19th century, for example, saw the dominance of the sheep-corn system of agriculture in Wessex, when vast flocks of sheep grazed on the high downland. Many parishes were newly enclosed and the chalk river valleys were dominated by water meadows along their lengths.

The landscape continues to change: agriculture intensifies, infrastructures are upgraded, and the make-up of rural society and settlement adjusts to regional and national pressures. The landscape is susceptible to a range of forces for change, many of which will impact on the historic environment. Our understanding of the historic aspects of the landscapes of the AONB is also continually developing, just as there are also unknown, unexplored and unrecorded archaeological sites in the AONB waiting to be discovered.

New studies undertaken by and on behalf of the AONB

An **Historic Landscape Characterisation** of the landscape of the AONB was completed in July 2008. This project characterised and mapped the historic and archaeological dimension of the present day landscape of the AONB. The project can be explored further at www.historiclandscape.co.uk. It provides the AONB Partnership with a fuller understanding of the cultural and historic evolution of the landscape.



Please refer to **Map 10** in the accompanying guide

A desk based study of the medieval deer parks of the AONB was completed in 2007¹⁸. The location of these sites is not just of historic importance but also indicates areas of potentially great ecological wealth.

Nationally designated heritage in the AONB

Designation is a way of marking that a building, monument or landscape is of 'special architectural or historic interest' in a national context and is made on the recommendation of English Heritage. It is a stage that identifies a site as being architecturally or historically important before any planning stage that may decide its future. In the AONB, there are:

- 556 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 2015 Listed Buildings, 77 of which are Grade I, and 106 Grade II*
- 16 Registered Parks and Gardens

When English Heritage says that a Listed Grade I or II* Building is 'at risk' they mean it is vulnerable through neglect and decay rather than alteration or demolition. This is what leads us to the 'At Risk' Register (Figure 7)¹⁹.

Nationally designated heritage at risk in the AONB

- The 2008 Buildings at Risk Register contains 6 buildings which are within the AONB
- The 2008 Scheduled Ancient Monuments At Risk Register contained 273 monuments which are at High Risk within the AONB

Figure 7: Nationally designated heritage at risk in the AONB

Local heritage designations and records

- 63 designated Conservation Areas
- Historic Parks and Gardens of county importance
- Historic designed landscapes of local importance
- The four county archaeological services record and protect the archaeology within the AONB, and maintain an individual Historic Environment Record/Sites and Monuments Record

18. Medieval Deer Parks of Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB - some initial research and interpretation by Katherine Barker, MA (2006-07).

19. The first edition of English Heritage's annual Heritage at Risk register was published in July 2008 and can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk



Literary, artistic and cultural associations

The landscapes of the AONB hold a special place in the origins and development of archaeology. The antiquarian Richard Colt Hoare resided at Stourhead, laid out the gardens there and studied the ancient monuments of Wiltshire publishing his work in the 1820s. General Pitt-Rivers' excavations and findings on Cranborne Chase in the late 19th century marked a new systematic approach to archaeological excavations. An approach followed by Heywood Sumner, archaeologist, artist and writer, when he undertook a survey of the archaeology of Cranborne Chase between 1911 and 1913.

Important literary figures associated with the area include poet and barrister Sir John Davies (1569-1626), antiquarian and writer John Aubrey (1626-1697), naturalist and writer W H Hudson (1841-1922), author and surgeon Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923), poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) and author and broadcaster Desmond Hawkins (1908-1999).

Other artistic and cultural connections include the architect Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) Prime Minister Anthony Eden (1897-1977), photographer Sir Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner and classical guitarist Julian Bream.

Special characteristics

- A rich legacy of landscape scale archaeological features including the Neolithic Dorset Cursus, and the Saxon Bokerley Dyke.
- A wealth of archaeological features especially in downland areas.
- Historic borderlands, with important Saxon and even Roman roots, once marginal land and often subject to late enclosure.
- The former Medieval delimited hunting preserve of the Cranborne Chase, which was not disenfranchised until 1829.
- A rich land use history, with areas which have a concentration of ancient enclosure, ancient woodland, and former common land.
- An historic settlement pattern (pre 1750) which has seen minimal infilling.
- A concentration of historic parklands, estates, and manor houses.

- Many Historic Parks and Gardens of county importance.
- Literary, artistic and historic connections of national distinction.

Key issues

Management

- Inappropriate management of some sites is an issue, particularly ploughing and other forms of site / monument disturbance or damage, for example from burrowing mammals, such as badgers and rabbits.
- Inappropriate development may adversely impact the setting of many sites, monuments and the historic cohesion of the landscape.
- Some unrecorded sites are almost certainly being damaged or lost.

Funding

- There is insufficient funding to protect and conserve the historic wealth of the AONB adequately.

Awareness

- There is a need for greater knowledge of the location and importance of the historic elements of the landscapes of the AONB, particularly by decision makers, land managers and young people.

OBJECTIVES

G	The historic, archaeological and cultural elements of the landscape of the AONB are conserved and enhanced.
H	The culture and traditions of the AONB are celebrated, valued and supported.

POLICIES

G1	Promote and develop the Historic Landscape Characterisation study as a tool for managing the historic and cultural environment of the AONB, providing a framework for policy making, planning decisions and research agendas.
G2	Ensure that the historic landscapes, designated and listed sites and areas, together with sites of local importance, are appropriately identified, recorded and managed.
G3	The AONB will normally only support 'enabling development' that seeks to secure the conservation or restoration of an historic feature if it is not at the expense of another historic feature or the setting of that historic feature or another. ¹
H1	Encourage and promote local traditions, customs and artistic expression that add to local identity, sense of place and reflect the special qualities of the AONB

¹ In addition, refer to English Heritage 2008 - Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places.



Theme 3 - Vibrant Local Communities

“Village occasions such as the pig race, apple day, Damerham Duck race and Chettle art display are fantastic and must continue”

Damerham, 15th May 2003

Background

The South West Sustainable Development Framework suggests that the region is particularly well placed to make the most of renewable energy, sustainable tourism, organic agriculture and other land-based industries. The current economy of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is characterised both by its traditional attributes and its location in relation to large regional centres, including London and the market towns on its periphery.

As a living, working countryside, the AONB might be expected to encourage sympathetic development to occur in response to local needs, in order to maintain viable, sustainable, communities. Rural regeneration initiatives may involve proposals for redevelopment or change of use. Increasing population growth, particularly at the southern periphery of the AONB, is projected to continue. This brings with it pressure for additional housing and associated employment development, whilst the continual rise in house prices results in an increasing demand for affordable and social housing to meet local needs, in most parts of the AONB.

Community Priority 4:

Support and influence innovative ways of maintaining and providing access to community facilities and services

Community Priority 5:

Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the built environment within its historic, cultural and landscape setting

Community Priority 6:

Promote the management of the impact of traffic on the AONB

Topics:

- Sustainable Rural Communities
- Planning and Transportation

SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

Overview

The population of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is just over 33,000, based on the 2001 Census. Spread over an area of 981 sq km, this gives a population density of 34 people per square kilometre. This is very low when compared to the average of 129 persons per sq km for rural England. 69% of AONB residents are deemed to live in 'villages' and a further 24% in 'hamlets or dispersed dwellings'. The low population density, the absence of large settlements within the AONB and daily commuting to the larger settlements on the AONB's periphery, all threaten the viability of remaining local services such as post offices, pubs, doctor's surgeries, village shops and village halls.

There has been a steady increase in the population within the AONB, particularly close to its southern perimeter, that has created a high demand for housing. This has led to rising house prices and a reduction in the availability of affordable housing. Young people cannot afford local housing, not least due to the lack of local employment opportunities. 25% of the population is over 60 years old and that figure rises to 32% in the southern half of the AONB¹. The New Earnings Survey indicates that average earnings of local people working in the rural areas of the AONB are below the regional and national average. The West Wiltshire Economic Partnership suggests that there is increasing polarisation between those commuters on high incomes who live in the area and local people on low earnings who are unable to afford housing (Figure 8).

	Gross Weekly Pay (£)
England	392.01
South West	343.19
Salisbury	333.80
West Wiltshire	333.64
New Forest	378.18
East Dorset	336.33
North Dorset	288.21

Figure 8: Social indicators

1. National percentage over 60 years old is 21%.

Service provision and access to services and facilities

The AONB is ranked amongst the most deprived parts of the country in relation to “barriers to housing and services”. The proximity of AONB residents to a number of key services has deteriorated since 2000. These services include primary and secondary schools, banks and building societies, doctor’s surgeries and post offices. There is evidence from the Rural Community Councils that there are isolated and significant pockets of deprivation.

Innovative solutions exist but these are usually time limited due to ongoing lack of funding. For example, between 2003 and 2008 the Sunshine Healthy Living Project worked with communities in the Mere, Barford and Tisbury areas to help to reduce fuel poverty and improve health. This was a successful partnership between voluntary, community groups and other public bodies. Very successful community shops have been established in East Knoyle and Maiden Bradley.

Local governance

Some local people have high levels of engagement in the system of local government though many express a lack of involvement and a sense of isolation from decision makers. Local Authorities have a duty to prepare Community Strategies for their areas. Within the AONB, the seven District Authorities (to become five in 2009) have set up Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). With more communities undertaking Parish Plans, Village Appraisals, Village Design Statements and Community Plans, there are now increased opportunities for local people to influence what happens in their areas.

The establishment of a unitary authority for Wiltshire will create new and different opportunities for local people to be involved in the decision-making processes through the creation of Area Boards and Community Area Partnerships. Where sought, a number of services may be devolved to parish councils supported by appropriate budgets. Funding may also be available for parish and town councils to participate in partnerships and community activities.

Public and community transport

Without a private car, accessing services, such as doctor’s surgeries or hospital, is difficult. Local authority supported buses provide transport on either a daily or weekly basis, particularly to the surrounding market towns. Some are highly valued and appreciated by local people. However, due mainly to cost, frequency or destination, usage rates are low which leads to service withdrawal.

Examples of successful community transport initiatives are becoming more common. The Chalke Valley Link Scheme, Hindon Voluntary Car Scheme, Wilton Community Link Scheme and Tisbus are examples of locally successful schemes. Demand responsive schemes such as Wiltshire County Council’s Connect2Wiltshire and North Dorset Nordcat, are best practice initiatives. More integrated transport options within the AONB could also help promote ‘green tourism’ initiatives as well as improving services for local communities.

Special characteristics

- Dispersed and small population spread over a large area.
- The AONB is characterised by an aging population requiring increased community support.
- Generally, the provision of services and facilities within the AONB does not meet local needs.
- The trend of commuting to higher paid jobs outside the AONB whilst living in the area is resulting in rising house prices.
- There are strong links between the AONB communities and Community Planners, nurtured through local partnership working.
- Community spirit is strong in many settlements, as demonstrated through community plans, participation in “Village of the Year” competitions and community led facility or transport schemes.

Key issues

Accessibility of services and facilities

- Access to local facilities is increasingly important due to low incomes, higher transport and fuel costs for many rural residents.
- Funding/support for rural service provision is scarce. Local shops are under threat as their viability is frequently linked to the provision of Post Office services

which are progressively being withdrawn.

- There are few affordable homes, facilities and services in the AONB aimed at the young or elderly, leading to their isolation.

Awareness of grants and advice

People sometimes do not know where to seek help, advice or support; there is a need for 'one stop shops' for advice and information.

Community spirit/pride

In some communities there is a lack of community spirit or local pride. Most people drive out of the village to schools, the shops and to work, leaving little opportunity to build any sense of community. The lack of facilities, such as a village hall, can exacerbate the situation as can the loss of a local church or village shop.

Lack of involvement

Many local people feel a strong sense of isolation from local authority decision makers. There is a desire for increased consultation on development proposals.

Support is needed for the Community Planning processes as an essential component of the engagement between local authorities and local communities. Village Plans and Village Design Statements enable communities to set out their views.

OBJECTIVES

I	The AONB is home to sustainable, active and cohesive communities who understand, appreciate and celebrate the special qualities of the AONB.
J	Thriving rural communities play an active role in fostering local services and conserving and enhancing the AONB.

POLICIES

I1	Support community initiatives that encourage and maintain the vitality and diversity of rural community life.
I2	Support community based initiatives that promote sustainable lifestyles such as those embracing appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, recycling and community transport.
I3	The AONB will work with partners to make housing more affordable in and around the AONB where that is consistent with the primary purposes of AONB designation
J1	Encourage and support local communities and groups in conserving their local environment and enhancing the sense of local pride and ownership.





PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

Overview

Four County and seven District Local Authorities had responsibility for planning and development issues as the statutory local planning authorities before this reviewed plan was published. There are now a total of nine councils, with the creation of the unitary Wiltshire Council.

National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). They highlight the importance of understanding landscape context and character when considering development. The most relevant guidance for the AONB is in PPS7, which sets out the Government's planning policies for sustainable development in rural areas. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB lies within two regions, the South West and the South East. Regional planning policy is to be set out by the two Regional Development Agencies in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)². The emerging RSSs both emphasise the importance of the environment, good design, character and quality. The South West Sustainable Development Framework also stresses the importance of using local materials and skills. National and regional planning policy is applied through Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)

2. PPS7 paragraph 14: '...RSS should recognise the environmental, economic and social value of the countryside that is of national, regional or, where appropriate, sub-regional significance. Policies in RSS and Local Development Documents should seek to maintain and enhance these values, so enabling the countryside to remain an important natural resource, contribute to national and regional prosperity and be enjoyed by all'.

prepared by the local authorities. Until all RSSs and LDFs are in place, saved policies from structure plans and local plans apply. The four County Councils each prepare Minerals and Waste Local Plans. These set out policies in relation to the utilisation of mineral resources and waste management.

The County Councils, as highway authorities, are also responsible for the production of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) which set out the policies and proposals that drive their work programmes. The A303, A30 and A354 are major strategic routes crossing the AONB. The A36 skirts the northern edge, whilst the A350 corridor, linking Poole northwards to the M4, follows the western side before continuing through the AONB from Shaftesbury to Warminster. These main arterial routes carry fast moving traffic and support the daily commuter traffic of the AONB population to the surrounding market towns and beyond.

Access is important to a thriving economy but it can have serious environmental consequences and significant impacts on the landscape character and tranquillity. Car ownership in the AONB is well above the national average, reflecting the difficulties of providing effective and affordable public transport in such a large and relatively sparsely populated area. The South West Regional Assembly estimates that 90% of journeys in the region are made by car with public transport generally not viable in a predominantly rural region. There are two active railway lines through the AONB; the main line from London to the South West which has a well used station at Tisbury and stations just outside the AONB; and the line from Warminster to Salisbury, which no longer stops within the AONB. These rail routes

could provide sustainable transport opportunities for people and goods within, to, and from the AONB. They will, however, need additional and affordable car parking to encourage more effective utilisation.

The responsibility for planning policy, transport policy and development control lies with the local authorities. The AONB Partnership has an important role to play in providing guidance, ensuring consistency in the application of planning policy across the AONB, and acting as a consultee on all development and land use change proposals that may have a significant impact and/or effect on the characteristics, special qualities or setting of the AONB. The constituent local planning authorities have all adopted the AONB Planning Protocol (Appendix 6) that sets out procedures for AONB input to policy establishment and those applications on which the AONB would expect to offer comment. The protocol is reviewed annually and has been seen to work well during the last three years.

The AONB has commissioned the following planning related studies:

- Market Towns Development Proposals
- Light Pollution
- Permitted Development Rights
- Roads and Planning
- Farm Diversification
- Landscape Sensitivity Study

The AONB Partnership has worked with the Dorset AONB and Dorset County Council in their 'Restoring our Rural Roads' initiative, which focuses on the means of removing urban-style highway artefacts, restoring the rural landscape character of the roads and influencing driver behaviour to reduce negative impacts on tranquillity and help protect vulnerable road users. The AONB is part of the Steering Group for the North Dorset and North East Dorset Transportation Study, and links with other Highways initiatives such as those dealing with verge management.

Nearly all the villages and hamlets in the AONB pre-date 1800 and many have Medieval or even Saxon roots. The historic elements of these villages remain highly visible and central to the character of these settlements. As stated previously, there are 2015 Listed Buildings, 63 Conservation Areas, 16 Listed Parks and Gardens and 556 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the AONB. Their protection, restoration and maintenance are a matter of priority, as they lend distinctive character to the landscape. In addition, the more modest vernacular buildings found throughout the AONB, add to the distinctiveness of local

settlements. Buildings of local historic character are not protected unless incorporated within a Conservation Area, so historic farms and other buildings sited away from settlements are especially vulnerable to change.

Where visible from the AONB, the surrounding landscape, which is often of significant landscape value, is an important element of the AONB's natural beauty. Relevant local planning authorities must have regard for the landscape and visual impact of development adjacent to or within close proximity of the AONB's boundary.³

The principal land use planning role of the AONB is to ensure there are consistent and coherent policies in place to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. If a conflict arises, the AONB Partnership will take the view that 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' takes priority over other matters.

Special characteristics

- A largely rural, open, and undeveloped landscape sensitive to change.
- Distinctive settlement patterns with historic elements readily visible and central to the character of settlements.
- Architectural styles vary considerably throughout the AONB, dependent on availability of building materials.
- The built environment forms an integral part of local character and distinctiveness and adds to the diversity of the AONB landscape as a whole.
- Large historic country houses at the centre of historic parklands and gardens and other characteristic buildings.
- A minor road network that reflects the deeply rural, tranquil character of the AONB, with few realignments and improvements.

3. Planning Inspector's appeal decision November 2008 - Land at part of Waterside Holiday Park, Bowleaze Cove, Weymouth ".....given that the Secretary of State has now published the Proposed Changes to the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), I attach significant weight to RSS Policy ENV3, which requires particular care to be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside AONBs which would damage their natural beauty, special character and special qualities – in other words to their setting. I conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the natural beauty of the AONB, either caused by the visibility of the static caravans themselves, or from the introduction of more alien tree planting, or by a combination of both. This would, in my view, conflict with national policy guidance, and in particular PPS7, and with Policy ENV3 in the emerging RSS". (appeal failed)

Key issues

Development pressure

- The need to integrate development proposals with landscape character both within and adjacent to the AONB is not widely understood or appreciated.
- Increased sub-urbanisation, unsympathetic design and inappropriate use of modern materials is diluting local character and leading to a loss of local distinctiveness.
- The importance of integrating infrastructure with the existing landscape character is not yet sufficiently well recognised.
- There is a need for greater, and more obvious, consistency and coherence in the formulation and application of planning policies by the local planning authorities that cover the AONB.
- The application of Community Infrastructure Levies (Developer Contributions) and other planning agreements could assist in achieving AONB Management Plan objectives.
- The cumulative effect of 'permitted development' can lead to a loss of landscape character with the use of non-local building materials and 'off the shelf' designs.
- The 'Buildings at Risk' register of English Heritage is not widely known nor its local relevance appreciated.
- Renewable energy targets, and the operational requirements of telecommunications operators, may lead to increasing pressure for the AONB to accommodate wind turbine and telecommunication mast developments.
- Overhead power and telecommunications lines detract from visual amenity as well as 'urbanising' the landscape
- National and regional predictions for housing requirements are causing the LPAs to consider significant annual numbers of new dwellings in villages within and close to the AONB.
- The scale of proposed new farm buildings.
- Developments in the setting of the AONB can have significant impacts on the AONB and need to be considered in relation to the purposes of AONB designation.

Tranquillity



Please refer to **Map 11** in the accompanying guide

Increasing levels of noise from road traffic and recreational pursuits, such as trail bike riding and vehicular use of Rights of Way, are adding to a perceived loss of rural tranquillity.

Highway improvements, excessive signage, lighting and other road 'furniture' are eroding the rural character of the AONB.

Road use

- Heavy traffic flows, especially daily commuting, cause congestion, pollution, loss of tranquillity and damage to minor roads and buildings.
- Traffic management schemes have not reduced the daily 'rat runs' used by cars avoiding the 'A' road traffic, which add to safety, noise, pollution and disturbance concerns amongst residents.
- The safety of all vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders remains an issue within the AONB.

Public transport versus the car

- Regular public transport is largely limited to the main A-class roads, making personal transport vital to reach many services and jobs. There is no incentive to use public transport.
- Weakness in infrastructure and high costs are a disincentive to use public transport.
- The railways are largely inaccessible and parking is limited and costly.

OBJECTIVES

K	The AONB inputs effectively to national, regional and local strategies, policies and plans
L	Coherent and consistent formulation and implementation of planning policies across the AONB takes full account of the purposes of designation and the character and quality of the area and its setting.
M	Policies and schemes to meet the housing and employment needs of local communities enhance the special qualities and characteristics of the AONB, including its built heritage.
N	Transportation planning and management takes full account of the AONB designation, protects the tranquillity and special qualities of the landscape and reduces transport impacts on the environment of the AONB

POLICIES

K1	Ensure the purposes and objectives of AONB designation are fully recognised in the development and implementation of Regional Spatial Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and other public policies, strategies and programmes.
K2	Encourage coherent and consistent formulation and implementation of planning policies that take full account of the local distinctiveness, character and quality of the AONB and its setting.
K3	Encourage local communities to identify local needs and assist in the conservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness through the preparation and development of Parish Plans, Village Design Statements and other initiatives.
K4	Encourage local planning authorities to direct Community Infrastructure Levies (Developer Contributions) towards appropriate AONB Management Plan objectives and activities.
L1	Continue the use of the AONB planning protocol by local planning authorities to ensure that the AONB Partnership is consulted on all development and land use change proposals that meet the criteria or may have a significant impact and/or effect on the characteristics, special qualities, or setting of the AONB.
L2	Encourage the adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance that reinforce AONB purposes, such as the local character, materials and historic structure and scale of settlements.
L3	Ensure that where new development is permitted it complements the special qualities of the AONB and takes full account of the area's setting and context through the consideration of appropriate Landscape Character Assessments and sensitivity and design studies.
M1	Encourage policies that demonstrate appropriate and adequate use of sustainable technologies, such as solar heating, and provide sufficient space for short term handling of waste and recyclable materials, in both domestic and employment situations.
M2	Support partners and property owners to improve/enhance the management of the built heritage.
M3	Pursue opportunities to underground and remove power and telecommunications lines
N1	Develop a consistent approach to the design, provision and maintenance of highways that is sympathetic to the landscape character of the AONB.
N2	Promote and help develop an integrated system, whereby roads, railways, public transport and Rights of Way networks interconnect, minimising the impact of traffic on the AONB and encouraging a safer and more attractive environment for walking, cycling and horse riding.
N3	Promote the provision of affordable parking facilities to enable and encourage people to leave their cars behind and use public transport.





Theme 4 - Towards a sustainable economy

“Retain the landscape
but encourage suitable
rural businesses
to increase local
employment”

Sixpenny Handley, 2nd June 2003

Background

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is a high quality landscape. Far from being a 'constraint' on economic development, the maintenance of the high quality environment of the AONB is essential for some of its key economic sectors, and underpins a number of others.

Historically, agriculture and forestry have always been important sectors within the AONB economy.

Reduction in numbers of full time farmers and decreasing numbers of livestock in recent years may have a serious effect on the special qualities of the landscape.

There is increasing awareness of the role that wood fuel could have in enhancing the management of woodland.

Local Action for Rural Communities, together with other prospective funding, has the potential to address issues such as improved access to services, increased access to qualifications, skills and better promotion of local products.

Community Priority 7:

Support the rural economy in ways that are sustainable

Topics:

- Local Economy and Employment
- Rural Land Management
- Recreation, Tourism and Access

Local economy and employment

Overview

Parts of the AONB have good access to London and the South East via the A303, which connects to the M3 to the east and to the A30 and Exeter to the west. The A36 route from the eastern boundary to the M27, Southampton and its Container Port, may also have an important influence on the area. The railway line from Exeter to Waterloo crosses the AONB roughly east-west, through Tisbury. Poole's perceived need for a fast route northward to the M4 and Bristol, means the A350 corridor has been in the spotlight for many years.

The boundary of the AONB touches several market towns including Salisbury, Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury and Warminster. It also abuts the SE Dorset conurbation adjoining Wimborne Minster on its southern boundary. The proximity of these towns, together with the regional centres of economic activity, results in an outward-looking economy. Between 1995-2000, employment growth in and around the AONB was strong, growing by 25%.

While Broadband coverage is largely now complete across the AONB, the speed of this connection is not ideal in some areas. Mobile phone reception is very poor in some areas and this poor communication network hinders the establishment and running of local businesses, although there are instances where small businesses appear to be thriving, for example in and around Teffont.

More people move into the area to retire than to work. As a consequence, there is a reduced active rural workforce and a loss of essential rural skills. There is a greater need for the active workforce, particularly the young, to commute to employment opportunities. Initiatives such as Wiltshire 'Wheels to Work' and the 'Dorset Scooter' Schemes have been very successful but they have limited coverage and are prey to constant financial uncertainty. More sustainable solutions are required.

Businesses can derive a benefit from operating in a protected landscape. The environment is a collection of assets which can provide a stream of benefits so long as they (the assets) are not depleted. Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is a high quality landscape that can be marketed as a business asset.

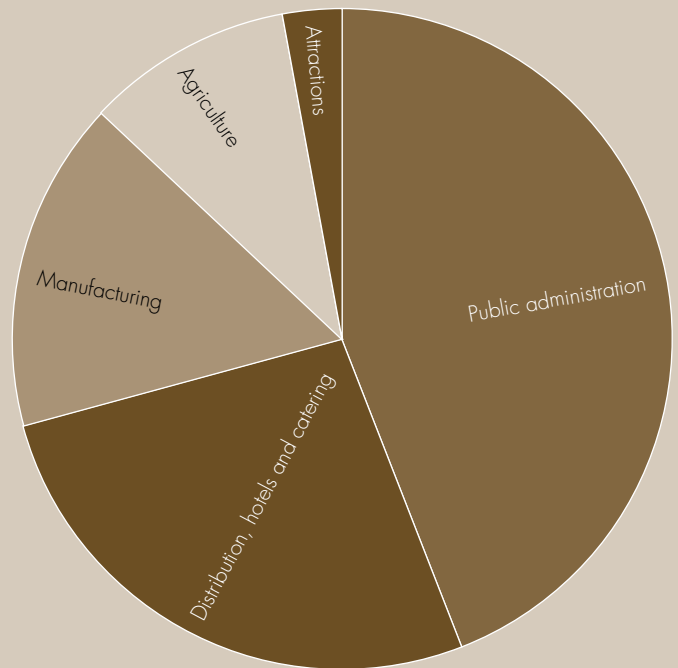
Businesses should, however, be closely related to the AONB. It would be inappropriate, for example, to establish businesses that transport bulk goods into the AONB, to then distribute them outwards. Such facilities are more appropriate to edge of town locations or industrial parks where their activities would not conflict with AONB purposes.

Employment sectors

Historically, agriculture and forestry were important sectors within the AONB. Current figures suggest agriculture is not the major employer but it is a fundamental component of the local economy within the AONB by managing land and landscapes that bring benefits to other sectors, particularly in tourism and recreation. It provides the basis for related jobs, such as in the food processing, retailing, catering and transport sectors. Whilst there are concentrations of agricultural activity in the central areas of the AONB, the majority of employment is in public administration, hotels, catering and manufacturing outside the AONB.

In 2000, the five main employment sectors of the economically active population were:

- **Public administration - 38% of total** - Situated on the outskirts of Salisbury, the hospital and research laboratories provide 90% of employment in the local Ebble Ward. Similarly, East Dorset District Council and Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust offer the majority of public administration opportunities, whilst near Blandford Forum, within the AONB, an army communications camp employs a large body of administrative staff on site. Another substantial military establishment also exists in the Salisbury Plain area, within commuting distance of the AONB.
- **Distribution, hotels and catering - 23% of total** - This sector comprises opportunities centred around the leisure industry and is concentrated in pubs, restaurants, hotels and B&Bs. Distribution represents approximately 15% of employment within this sector (3% of total employment) perhaps constrained by limited infrastructure both within the AONB and links to other centres of economic activity.
- **Manufacturing - 14% of total** - This is an important sector with a concentration around Mere, due to the activity of the Deads Maid Quarry Industrial Estate and the Mere Hill Brush Company.
- **Agriculture - 8.7% of total** - Approximately 1,700 people make up the direct agricultural labour force within the AONB. This suggests that a substantially higher percentage of the AONB's workforce is employed in agriculture, than in the South West as a whole (1.5%).
- **Attractions - 2.5% of total** - Despite its relatively small base, tourism is a potential growth sector. Sustainable tourism development could diversify the local economy. There are several successful local attractions, such as Cranborne Manor Gardens, Longleat and Stourhead, all inside the AONB boundary, but many areas are without opportunities for overnight stays, which limits income from this sector.



administered by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and by August 2008, a bid was successful in attracting £2.85 million in to the AONB and adjacent areas under the Local Action for Rural Communities scheme heading.

The AONB and the Community Partnership Executive of North Dorset (CPEND) jointly prepared the bid entitled 'Sowing SEEDS' (Figure 9). It was developed to support innovative activities and projects by rural communities, businesses (including farmers, growers and foresters) and community organisations within the area. 'Sowing SEEDS' now offers opportunities for rural regeneration initiatives, many of which will be based on the high quality environment and the special qualities of the AONB.



Please refer to **Map 12** in the accompanying guide

Between 2008 and 2013, a Local Action Group, made up of representatives from the local community, will decide which community based initiatives or projects will receive funding from 'Sowing SEEDS'.

This funding is the first of its kind to cover the entire AONB area and beyond to the west and offers new prospects to local communities of all ages, with innovative project ideas.

Local Action for Rural Communities

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) (2007-2013) aims to support the creation of genuinely sustainable farming, forestry and food sectors, whilst also bringing together wider benefits for the economy, the environment and rural communities. Under the Local Action for Rural Communities the South West RDPE funding is

Supporting rural businesses	By increasing collaboration between businesses in the food and drink sector, reducing the supply chain, providing training opportunities and promoting the sector.
Enhancing and conserving the environment	By improving the appreciation and understanding of the environment by local people and businesses.
Empowering young people	By creating a lasting Youth Local Action Group (LAG) with increasing confidence and skills.
Developing opportunities from Local Culture and Heritage	By developing a range of exciting and innovative projects developed by local communities.
Sustaining Local Communities	By engaging the local community in addressing their own needs through experience and knowledge from older people, partners in the area, community groups and younger people alike.

Figure 9: 'Sowing SEEDS' encompasses:

Special characteristics

- Generally the AONB has an outward looking economy.
- There is a concentration of employment in public administration, creating a dependence on a few large employers.
- The majority of employment opportunities are in the boundary towns with less than 20% located in the rural centre.
- Strong 'high tech' business growth at the periphery of the AONB contrasts with a relatively weak new business start-up rate for the area as a whole.
- The rural areas are characterised by low value added manufacturing and low local wage levels.

Key issues

Business opportunities - There is poor infrastructure, particularly relating to public transport in remote rural areas, access to services and slow broadband communications technology. Many residents want to work locally or from home but cannot do so effectively.

The rural areas of the AONB need businesses that market their products at a sale price far higher than the cost of production - high valued added manufacturing.

The tourism sector is under-developed and needs additional accommodation, public transport and local services for

visitors to attract over-night stays. Tourism partnerships need support¹.

Training opportunities - There is a need for training opportunities to be provided locally, within the AONB. Most people who wish to retrain or improve qualifications/skill levels currently need to travel outside the AONB. Younger people, especially, are disadvantaged when they have to rely on public transport.

Better promotion of local products - A need exists to diversify across all sectors but perhaps particularly within the land based economy, adding value through the sale and promotion of local produce.

OBJECTIVES

O	Local communities benefit from rural regeneration opportunities that help conserve and enhance the AONB and its setting.
P	The local economy is supported and valued by communities and visitors alike.

POLICIES

O1	Utilise opportunities within the England Rural Development Plan, and other initiatives and funding schemes, to achieve the needs of the local economy and objectives of AONB designation.
P1	Support local businesses, and those in close proximity to the area, that embrace sustainable development principles and the objectives of AONB designation.

See also landscape, agriculture, forestry, roads, traffic and rights of way, sustainable rural communities, awareness and understanding.

Rural land management

Overview

Land ownership in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is diverse being owned by public bodies, companies, trusts, family partnerships and private individuals. Much of the land is down to agriculture, woodland and forestry.



Please refer to **Map 13** in the accompanying guide

The AONB has a higher proportion of farmland than would be expected in either the South West or South East Regions. In 2007, just over 82% (80,700 ha) of the AONB

1. The local Destination Management Organisations are: Visit Wiltshire - www.swtourism.co.uk/partnerships/dmos/destinations/Wiltshire.ashx and the Dorset Destination Management Partnership - www.dorsetdmo.co.uk/

(981 square kilometres)² was under agriculture and over 14,700 hectares under forestry. Within the AONB, there is a total of 844 hectares of Forestry Commission managed land in seven properties. The vast majority of woodland within the area is in private ownership.

The rich ecological diversity, wealth of archaeological treasures and distinct landscape of different character areas is due, in part, to the stewardship of land managers over past generations and to the commitment of many today.

Arable farming covers just over half of the AONB with another third under grassland. This has remained stable for some years. Livestock farming is in decline, with falling stocking levels. Diversification, re-connecting with local markets and promoting local food and produce are a means by which some are adapting to change. However, viable livestock systems must be maintained as grazing is a means to conserve flower rich chalk grasslands and the open landscape. Farmers markets, cooperatives and local branding are all relevant and have been developed to some extent throughout the AONB.

The AONB supports the continuance of ancient/veteran trees and significant woodland cover, from ancient semi-natural broadleaved through to coniferous shelterbelts associated with the arable landscapes. Particularly well-wooded areas are found around Cranborne Chase, on the Pen Selwood and Longleat Hills and on the plateau areas of the West Wiltshire Downs. There are substantial tracts of ancient woodland (over 7,000 h) high in ecological value. These include areas of existing ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and ancient woodland where the broadleaves have been removed and the site replanted with non-native species (known as planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS)). Whilst ASNW is a habitat that currently adds significantly to ecological biodiversity, PAWS present a key opportunity for habitat restoration (Map 8).

Interest in woodlands is nurtured in the AONB by the Cranborne Chase Woodfair. Inaugurated in 2007 by the AONB team, it attracted 6,200 people; involved 120 local businesses; and opened up a new shop window for woodland and other local products from this area.

Agri-environment schemes

The agri-environment schemes represent an excellent way to achieve landscape scale improvements in all aspects of land management. They are the largest single public

investment in this area, generating some £3.5 million of grant aid per year (Figure 10).

Single Payment Scheme
All farmers are compensated for carrying out their activities in an environmentally sensitive manner.
Optional Targeted Schemes
Environmental Stewardship Scheme is the primary way in which land owners are paid to carry out environmental improvements. The uptake of this scheme in the AONB is above the national average with 214 Entry Level agreements (out of 845 farms in the AONB), 26 of which are Organic Entry Level and 13 Higher Level agreements (linked to the management of important heritage features).
Due to end by 2014:
Countryside Stewardship agreements 122 holdings
Habitat Scheme agreements 16 holdings
Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme 84 holdings

Figure 10: Two types of agri-environment payments

The AONB commissioned a research project Strengthening Landscape Character through Entry Level Environmental Stewardship in 2008³ which fed into the Review of Progress for the Scheme 2007/2008. This indicates that uptake of environmental stewardship within the AONB is above the national average (see figure 11). This work will also contribute to the Environmental Stewardship Scheme review in 2010 and Common Agricultural Policy reform in 2013.

	National Target (Proportion of total area of farmed land in England)	England		Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB	
		Area (ha)	% of farmed area (9,200,000 ha)	Area (ha)	% of farmed area (87,317 ha)
ELS	60%	4,394,466	48%	44,768	51%
OELS	4%	268,898	3%	5,491	6%

Figure 11: Uptake of Environmental Stewardship in the AONB

Woodland management

During the 16th and 17th centuries, vast flocks of sheep were folded onto arable land overnight. This required large tracts of hazel coppice to be maintained for hurdle

2. DEFRA state that estimates are based on a sample survey and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling error.

3. 'Strengthening Landscape Character through Entry Level Stewardship', Dr Jemma Batten, Black Sheep Countryside Management August 2008

making and fuel. The 18th and 19th centuries, and the World Wars, saw massive national woodland clearances, including clear fell within the AONB. There then followed rapid and extensive afforestation, sometimes with unsuitable species or in unsuitable areas, from the 1940s to the 1990s. There are also many woodlands created as game coverts. These are often poorly designed or planted in unsuitable locations. However, game shooting is one of the main reasons for woodland management in the AONB and sensitive management of game shoots can contribute positively to species and habitat conservation⁴.

The national approach to sustainable forestry is set out in A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests, published in 2007. The South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework 2005 identified how the region can benefit more from its woodlands. At the county level, the Dorset Trees, Woods and Forest Strategy provides a framework for action through the Woodlink initiative in the southern two thirds of the AONB.

In 2009, this AONB plans to continue research into the woodlands of the area, in order to publish detailed guidance for AONB woodland policy and management.

Special characteristics

- The agricultural character of the AONB is typified by arable cropping, especially the south-eastern sector and on the West Wiltshire Downs.
- The Vale of Wardour and the north-western edge of the area are mostly grasslands.
- A typical AONB farm is slightly larger than the regional average and consists of predominantly arable land with some permanent pasture and woodland. It is the mixed nature of the holdings that contributes significantly to the special qualities of the landscape and its biodiversity.
- The mosaic of broad-leaved, mixed and coniferous woodland, shelterbelts, copses, hedgerows and veteran trees is a distinctive and key element in the AONB landscape.
- Hill top copses are especially characteristic.
- Cranborne Chase is particularly notable for its unusually high proportion of ancient woodland within a chalk landscape. This is largely due to its historic status as a royal hunting area. Remnants of the royal forests of Selwood and Gillingham also survive in the AONB.

4. Blake, D. 2007 *Raising Our Game - a survey of game management in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB*.



Key issues

Climate change - Climate change and mitigation strategies may affect the choice of crop grown and hence the landscape character of the AONB.

Commodity prices - As the value of arable crops rise, many farmers now look to the open market for their income, so reducing the influence of state support. While the arable sector seems stable, some price led changes do affect the landscape character of the AONB:

- greatly increased area of rape;
- reduced area of peas;
- ending of 'set-aside' land category;
- increased area of grassland; and
- a move from winter to spring sown barley.

Agriculture in decline - Though part-time farming has increased, 101 full-time farmers have been lost. A major decline can be seen in livestock numbers with over 7,000 fewer cows and calves, 13,800 fewer sheep and 4,000 fewer pigs⁵. This has implications for the AONB's biodiversity as flower-rich grasslands are best managed by grazing and arable monoculture techniques can reduce insect and flower populations.

1	Rising cost of fuel.
2	Rising cost of nitrogenous fertilizer and the possible extension of Nitrogen Vulnerable Zones.
3	Pressure to produce additional environmental stewardship in return for government support.
4	Changes in the natural water regime (precipitation, evapotranspiration, as well as surface and underground run-off).
5	Further contraction of the labour and skills base.
6	New pathogens may lead to a further reduction in the number of grazing animals and increased costs for enhanced bio-security.
7	Lack of support services, such as local abattoirs.
8	Growing rules and regulations (there are over 200 public documents relating to farmland outputs and farm management ⁶).

Figure 12: Eight key challenges facing agriculture

Biomass fuels - Trees and woodlands can be a sustainable bio-mass resource. The attraction of wood fuel is growing fast as oil prices rise and people seek more sustainable lives.

Ancient woodland management - Ancient semi-natural woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland sites continue to be vulnerable to ecological isolation, poor management and other direct and diffuse threats such as pressure to remove dangerous trees.

Invasive non-native species - Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Rhododendron are increasingly common in the AONB and threaten the sustainability of woodlands and other habitats by increasing operational costs and destroying biodiversity (See page 32 - Biodiversity).

Deer management - Continuous cover forestry with natural regeneration will require more effective management of the deer population across the AONB, as the numbers and range of deer populations are all increasing. Rabbit and squirrel control measures may also need reviewing⁷.

Access management - The existing network of public Rights of Way, open access areas and permissive access extends throughout all land types. Well maintained facilities are respected with less potential for misuse and trespass. Increased access for vehicles, horses and walkers represents both an opportunity for land owners and a challenge for traditional activities such as game management, forestry operations and deer management.

OBJECTIVES

Q	A sustainable countryside where diverse and viable agriculture, forestry and other land based enterprises support the demand for food, fuel and other produce in ways that conserve and enhance the landscape character and biodiversity of the AONB.
R	Landowners and managers protect, conserve and enhance trees, woodlands and chalk grassland as key components of the AONB landscape, alongside more uncommon features such as ponds and lakes.
S	The potential impacts of globalisation on land use and natural beauty are known and understood

POLICIES

Q1	Support sustainable farm diversification and multi-purpose woodland management where it is appropriate to the AONB, integrates with the scale and landscapes of the AONB and accords with planning policy.
Q2	Encourage the provision of appropriate land based skills training that ensures the continuation of land management skills that conserve and enhance the landscape.
R1	Encourage national, regional and local land management policies to be consistent with the purpose of AONB designation.

5. DEFRA state that estimates are based on a sample survey and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling error.

6. Lane Use Consultants and Andrew Davis, 2008. Hampshire Downs Local Land Management Framework pre-pilot report of findings. Hampshire County Council and Natural England, Jan 2008.

7. MacDonald, D. & Baker, S. 2006 - The State of Britain's Mammals, Mammals Trust UK and WildCRU, Page 9.

R2	Encourage the inclusion of grant scheme options that are consistent with the purpose of AONB designation and encourage the maximum take-up by landowners and managers.
S1	Endeavour to identify specific impacts of globalisation on the special qualities of the AONB and indicate a policy or policies which would help maximise any potential positive impact and minimise any potential negative impact.

See also policies for landscape, biodiversity, planning and transportation, rural economy, awareness and understanding

Recreation, Tourism and Access

Overview

It is widely recognized that the high quality environment of the South West is the key driving force behind tourism in the region. The South West Tourism 'Towards 2015 – A Tourism Strategy for the South West' reinforces the principle that any development and management of tourism must be fully consistent with the conservation and enhancement of the global and local environment. Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, with its stunning landscapes, wildlife and historic riches, offers a very attractive environment for local people and visitors alike.

One of the most distinctive features of the AONB is its extensive and diverse Rights of Way (RoW) network and open access areas. An accessible and well visited access network adds value to the local economy as businesses benefit from supplying services to the users of Rights of Way. There are 1,655 kilometres of RoW within the AONB offering immense opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. Users are frequently rewarded with spectacular panoramas unseen from the road. Many RoW are of historic importance originating as long distance, ridge top routes across the chalk. Medium to long distance routes include the Wessex Ridgeway Jubilee Trail and Monarchs Way; and parts of the Stour Valley and MacMillan Ways. The Wiltshire and North Dorset Cycleways also traverse the area.

Well maintained and managed byways open to all traffic provide opportunities for people with restricted mobility to access the more remote parts of the AONB. The routes are usually well defined and, provided that surfaces are in good condition, they are generally free from stiles, gates and other obstructions, so can easily be used by older people and families with young children, cyclists, and carriage drivers. There is a need for a byway/off road vehicle management strategy that deals with both public and land management access requirements.





The four County Councils have prepared Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) for their networks that reflect the modern patterns of demand and land use. RoWIPs explore linkages between the off-road network, permissive routes, open access areas, minor roads and local transport routes together with local facilities and services. They also strive to ensure the network is as accessible as possible to people with disabilities or who are disadvantaged. The County Councils each have committed and active Local Access Forums that bring all interested parties together to promote responsible access, particularly through the RoWIPs.

A pilot 'PATHWATCH' scheme is to be launched within the AONB during 2009. Being led by Wiltshire constabulary, it will enable the public to use a special phone number to report to the police any suspected illegal or irresponsible use of RoW. It will be part of a wider 'Rural Watch' initiative being undertaken by Wiltshire constabulary but mirroring a successful 'Pathwatch' scheme in Sussex. If the trial is a success, the intention is to bring the experience of the scheme to the attention of Dorset and Hampshire police forces.

Some attractions are consistently well visited, including Longleat House and Safari Park, Centre Parcs and the National Trust properties of Stourhead and Kingston Lacy. The archaeological and historic wealth of the AONB also provides a focus for many visitors. Old Wardour Castle, the medieval village of Wyck, Knowlton Church, Cley Hill Fort and Badbury Rings are but a few of the numerous sites worthy of a visit. Many well attended events take place annually within the AONB, the largest of which is the Great Dorset Steam Fair.

As a renowned royal hunting ground, Cranborne Chase was governed by its own laws until just 180 years ago. Many archaeological and historic features are still intact, with modern field archaeology being pioneered here through the excavations of General Pitt-Rivers in the 19th century. Examples of the majority of the different types of ancient monuments within the South of England are to be found within Cranborne Chase, making the area an unrivalled educational and recreational resource for both the specialist and the casually inquisitive. The AONB is also blessed with several publically accessible nationally important parks and gardens including Longleat, Kingston Lacy, Stourhead, and General Pitt-Rivers Victorian Pleasure Gardens at the Larmer Tree. These nationally important Victorian Pleasure Gardens contain a collection of colonial and oriental buildings and an open air theatre.

Special characteristics

- The AONB has an extensive network of Rights of Way, open access and named routes, with a substantial number of routes not yet recorded on Definitive Maps
- There are diverse landscapes, wildlife, historic and cultural features attractive to visitors.
- A number of notable visitor attractions lie within the AONB.
- Whilst visitor numbers are relatively low, congestion can occur during the summer tourism season.
- The annual Great Dorset Steam Fair, within the AONB, is claimed to be the largest of its sort in Europe, is attended by many tens of thousands of visitors and can cause a multitude of problems such as traffic congestion and community safety.
- Local village businesses acknowledge the relatively high value of the tourist/visitor trade within the local economy.

Key issues

- There is no overall visitor or tourism strategy for the AONB.
- There is a lack of AONB image or identity with a scarcity of AONB focused information or interpretation.
- Tourist Information Centre staff do not possess detailed knowledge about the AONB.
- The potential economic benefits of recreation and/or tourism are not widely realised, with few schemes promoting local food and drink or sustainable tourism, within the AONB.
- Peak visitor numbers can cause local congestion with few, if any, public transport schemes designed for visitor use.
- Visitor numbers and the range, type and location of potential visitor facilities are not regularly monitored within and around the AONB.
- Any increase in numbers of visitors is perceived to reduce tranquillity by some residents and visitors.
- There is insufficient funding to adequately maintain, waymark or improve all RoWs.
- RoWIPs should improve accessibility for all, although issues of inadequacy of RoW maintenance and signage persists in places, due to insufficient funding.
- Recurring conflict amongst some users of RoW endures and vehicular use does cause material damage in some areas.

OBJECTIVES

T	The recreation and tourism sector is sustainable, contributes to the local economy and is in harmony with the distinctive visual, natural, historic and cultural qualities of the AONB.
U	Everyone has the opportunity to access and enjoy the special qualities of the AONB for quiet enjoyment and improved health and well being both from within and outside the AONB, in accord with the purposes of designation.

POLICIES

T1	With relevant partners, develop an AONB-wide sustainable recreation and tourism strategy based on, and respecting, the special qualities of the AONB and purposes of designation.
T2	Investigate external funding opportunities to develop or support recreation, tourism, and access initiatives that are focused on the special qualities of the area.
U1	Encourage and assist local communities to take an active role in providing relevant information, interpretation, facilities and services for visitors in support of the special qualities of the AONB.
U2	Support Local Access Forums and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan implementation, funding and encourage consistency of approach towards access issues and AONB objectives.



Financial Implications

"The Woods in
Cranbourn Chase
are about fourteen
miles in extent"

W Chafin, 1818

Change is a continual part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB's landscapes arising from the decisions, practical actions and investments of individual landowners, land managers and public agencies.

The purpose of this Management Plan is to guide change in ways that will conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and promote quiet enjoyment. Encouraging such processes needs its own resources.

The co-ordinating body is the AONB Partnership, with an annual budget of just under £290,000 (2008/09 figures), funded 25% by the constituent local authorities and 75% by Natural England to recognise the local management responsibilities set out in Section 85 and 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the national importance of the designation confirmed in Planning Policy Statement 7 (paragraph 21).

Great improvements can be achieved without necessarily spending additional money but rather by ensuring that all the activities and expenditure that do take place enhance the area, even if that is not the primary purpose of a particular task. One of the Partnership's roles is to assist with the effective allocation of existing resources.

The Management Plan has been prepared on the assumption that environmental grant support to landowners, land managers, public agencies and groups will be maintained at least at its present level. Should there be a reduction in such support then a number of the plan's objectives will not be achievable.

The AONB Team works hard to find and secure external funds that might not otherwise be accessible to individual local stakeholders. The AONB Partnership has been successful in securing new sources of funds for stakeholders within the area but such support cannot be achieved without the appropriate resources.

OBJECTIVES

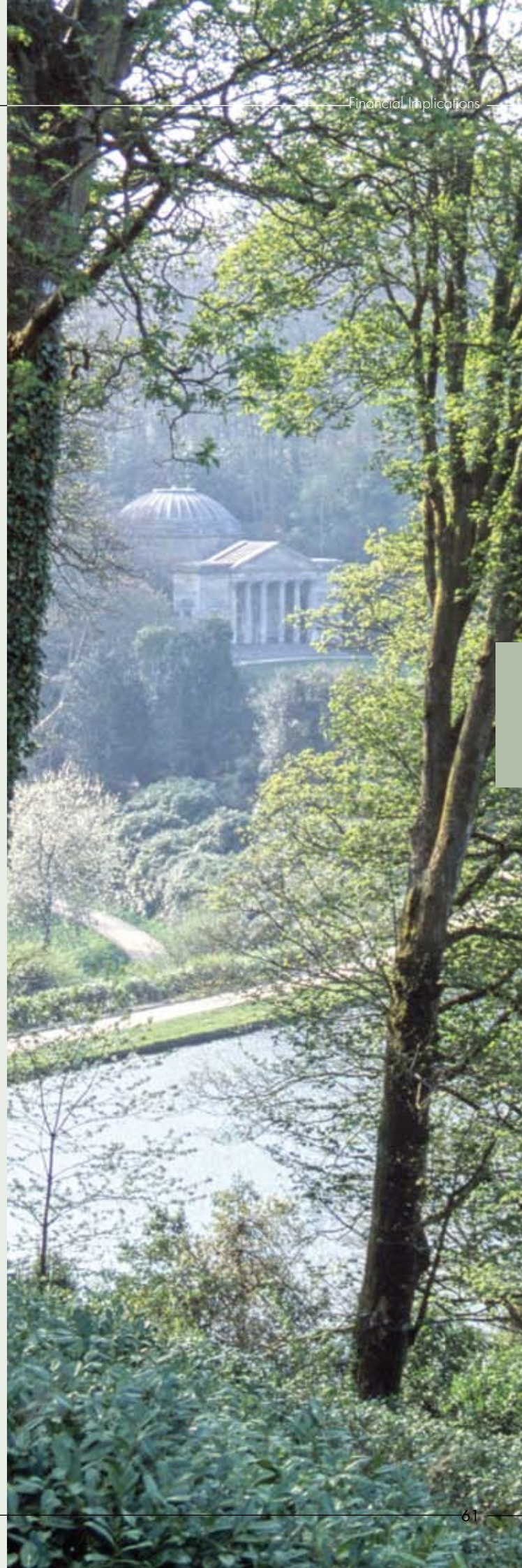
V

Sufficient resources are in place to support the co-ordinating and facilitation roles of the AONB Partnership.

POLICIES

VI

Endeavour to secure the resources needed to meet the aspirations of the Management Plan across administrative boundaries.





Spatial Issues by landscape

"Yes, sheep are the
treasure of the downs...
it was sheep whose
teeth created the
very tapestry of the
downland surface"

HJ Massingham, 1936

Introduction

There are issues and challenges faced by the landscapes and communities of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB that apply to many or most landscape types. One example is the viability of the family farm; and development pressures resulting from national demographic predictions are another. The funding of incentives for activities that conserve and enhance at a landscape scale is an overarching challenge.

However, this appraisal focuses on those issues and challenges that are particularly pertinent to individual landscape types defined in the Integrated Landscape Assessment for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs.

Landscape type 1:

Chalk Escarpments

- Dramatic chalk escarpments eroded into spurs and deep combes
- Underlying geology of Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk giving rise to predominantly calcareous soils
- Areas of unimproved chalk downland of international importance
- Field systems on lower slopes, including strip lynchets close to Medieval villages sited along the spring line
- Improved pasture and arable fields occupy the shallower, more accessible slopes where straight-sided fields represent late 18th / early 19th century inclosure
- Hanging woodland and sunken lanes are features of the steep, enclosing chalk combes
- Panoramic views over adjacent landscapes

Issues and challenges

- Decreases in livestock grazing leading to loss of grassland habitat
- Visibility of changes
- A350 corridor and potential visibility of any development



Landscape type 2:

Open Chalk Downland



- Large-scale landform of broad rolling hills intercepted by a dry river valley
- Dominated by Upper Chalk geology with drift clays with flint capping on higher ground
- A predominantly arable landscape divided into large, rectangular units with straight-sided fields representing late 18th / early 19th century inclosure
- Remnant chalk grassland, ancient broad-leaved woodland and yew woodland are important habitats
- Main roads cut across the undulating landscape linking major settlements on either side of the AONB
- Large open skies and distant panoramic views
- Low density scattered settlement of farmsteads and the occasional downland village
- Numerous Neolithic burial and ritual monuments and Bronze Age barrows
- Later pre-historic and Romano-British ditches and defensive earthworks

Issues and challenges

- Arable crop changes influenced by globalisation, commodity prices, farm inputs and costs
- Exposed transport corridors - A303 / A350 / A354 - and potential visibility of any development
- Erosion and truncation of Ancient Monuments

Landscape type 3:

Wooded Chalk Downland

- An elevated downland landscape with dramatic intercepting combe valleys and rounded upstanding ridges
- Dominated by an Upper Chalk geology with drift clays with flints capping higher ground
- A well wooded landscape with large woods, shelter belts, copses and clumps creating a series of enclosed spaces or 'rooms' surrounded by trees
- Mosaic of unenclosed downland, improved grassland and arable fields, dating from 19th century inclosure, between the woodland
- Chalk grassland and ancient woodland provide important nature conservation habitats
- Typical low density, scattered settlement of individual farmsteads with the occasional downland village or Medieval hunting lodge
- Visible archaeological features including Neolithic long barrows, Bronze Age round barrows, prehistoric to Romano-British earthworks and field systems
- Panoramic views from upstanding chalk ridges to adjacent ridges and into valley coombes

Issues and challenges

- Conservation of heritage / archaeological interests
- Impacts of climate changes on mixed farming and forestry / ancient woodlands
- Connectivity between woodlands and maintenance of enclosures



Landscape type 4:

Downland Hills



- A series of prominent hills and knolls
- Dominated by Upper Chalk geology giving rise to argillic brown earths
- Land cover is predominantly arable, with improved pasture on lower ground towards the river valleys
- Dominated by a pattern of medium to large parliamentary type fields
- Deciduous and coniferous woodland silhouetted against the skyline, clothing the crests of the slopes
- Low density, dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads
- The absence of major roads contributes to the feeling of remoteness
- A number of ancient woodlands including Burwood, Ashwood Copse and Bouldsbury Wood (SSSI)
- Neolithic and Bronze Age burial monuments, prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures, settlements, field systems and hill forts contribute to the plethora of visible, historic features of the landscape
- Panoramic views from hill tops

Issues and challenges

- Conservation of archaeology and ancient woodlands
- Development pressures on the villages
- 'Horsiculture' and change of sense of place
- Decrease in agricultural stock grazing

Landscape type 5:

Chalk River Valleys

- Strongly enclosing valley sides, frequently eroded to form dry valleys
- The steepest valley slopes have retained their semi-natural chalk grassland or are clothed in 'hanging' woodland while the shallow valley sides have been exploited for cultivation
- The clear, fast-flowing chalk rivers are a key habitat
- The floodplain supports water meadows, cress beds and damp pasture
- The valleys typically provide convenient transport corridors, containing major roads and railways
- Straight-sided fields represent late 18th/early 19th century Parliamentary inclosure, with large scale fields resulting from 20th century boundary loss
- Field boundaries and footpaths often reflect the tracks, droves and hollow ways that took livestock from and to the downs in the Medieval period
- A series of linear spring line villages typically lie at the foot of the valley slopes
- Isolated Neolithic long barrows, Bronze Age round barrows and water meadow channels on the valley floor contribute to visible archaeology
- The rural landscapes are sometimes interrupted by the large volumes of traffic that use the valleys as transport corridors

Issues and challenges

- Waterflows and water resource management
- 'Horsiculture' and loss of sense of place
- Development pressures (expensive properties and high demand)



Landscape type 6:

Greensand Terrace

- Flat aprons of land from which the dramatic chalk escarpments and hills rise
- Dominated by arable fields of Parliamentary inclosure
- Large, geometric fields and open skies contrast with the smaller scale, enclosed landscape of the adjacent Greensand Hills
- Upper Greensand geology giving rise to rich brown earth soils that have a high agricultural value
- Land use is predominantly agricultural, including cereal cropping, grass rotations, dairy farming and stock rearing
- Mixed woodland runs in discontinuous belts along the base of the chalk escarpment
- Coniferous belts shelter dispersed farmsteads
- General absence of prehistoric earthworks

Issues and challenges

- A30 corridor, traffic volumes, and loss of tranquillity
- Field sizes and pressures on farming
- Development pressures



Landscape type 7:

Greensand Hills



- Upper Greensand is exposed as a band between the older clays and younger chalk
- The Greensand typically forms upstanding hills that have been eroded by tributaries of the major rivers into a series of rounded knolls and deep valleys
- Hills support a proportion of woodland, both deciduous and coniferous
- Country houses and estates, set within landscaped parkland contribute to the scenic beauty of the area
- Distinctive patterns of settlement include villages hidden in the shelter of the deep valleys
- Fortifications are strategically located on the hilltops
- Ancient sunken lanes wind their way through the hills
- Small and irregular fields characterise areas of agricultural land use
- Meadows and wet woodland are typical of the valley floors

Issues and challenges

- Heritage conservation especially parklands
- Viability of commercial forestry
- Livestock grazing

Landscape type 8:

Rolling Clay Vales

- Vale occupying a geological anticlinal between the chalk
- Varied underlying geology with many different geological exposures
- Pastoral landscapes of small scale fields divided by lush hedgerows and scattered with woods and copses
- Layout of fields, farms and villages illustrate the pattern of medieval settlement, clearance and farming
- Rivers and their tributaries meander through the vale
- A sense of enclosure is provided by the surrounding upland landscape
- A mixed agricultural landscape of lush improved pasture and arable production with water meadows on the valley floor
- Wooded character with broad leaf and mixed woodland (some of ancient origin) scattered across the vale
- Villages dispersed over the floor of the vale

Issues and challenges

- Viability of family farms and dairying
- Water regimes (Nadder and Sem rivers)
- Transportation and vehicle accessibility
- Development pressures, particularly around Tisbury, and potential loss of character





Implementation

“Encourage a true community spirit that embraces and involves all people”

Donhead St Mary, 28th May 2003

Who implements the Management Plan?

This is an ambitious Management Plan. Successful implementation is beyond the resources of the Partnership Panel or AONB Team alone and will require the active collaboration and participation of all those involved in its management. It is a plan for all those whose decisions affect the natural beauty of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs, either directly or indirectly, now and in the future, working in partnership to achieve the Vision.

By supporting the implementation of this Plan, government, local authorities, other public bodies and other 'relevant authorities' will be contributing to their 'Section 85' duty to "have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB". It is important that the strategies, plans and action plans of key local, regional and national authorities, agencies and organisations reflect the vision, objectives and policies of this plan.

Partnership Delivery Plan

To implement the Vision, objectives and policies of the Management Plan, more precise actions have been identified in a separate document, the Partnership Delivery Plan. Each year this will include both the 'ongoing' tasks and 'new' actions to be undertaken. The AONB Partnership will prepare an Annual Delivery Plan showing clearly which actions will be targeted to be undertaken in the next financial year and which organisations will be involved.

It is recognised that it is absolutely essential to involve partners fully in agreeing actions, responsibilities and resource allocations to secure their real commitment to Management Plan tasks that require their involvement.

During the period of this Management Plan the objectives and policies set out in it should remain central to the conservation, enhancement, understanding and enjoyment of the AONB. The Partnership Delivery Plan will focus on the actions derived from the policies set out in this Management Plan. The Partnership retains the right to adjust the priorities or develop policies in the light of changed circumstances.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of this Management Plan and the actions outlined within the Delivery Plan is an essential task for the AONB Team and is grant-aided as part of the core activities undertaken. There are essentially two types of monitoring work:

- Action monitoring - a mechanism to establish whether actions outlined within the plan have been undertaken.
- Condition monitoring - a mechanism to establish if actions undertaken have had the desired effect, or impact, on the AONB.

Action monitoring - This is an important activity and will be reported on a regular basis to the AONB Partnership and Partnership Forum. An Annual Report will summarise the activities of both the AONB Team and partners. It will include details of the tasks undertaken, the outcomes of that work (that is the effect upon the AONB), whether ahead or behind schedule (progress reports) and the funding and other resources employed (business reports).

Condition monitoring - To monitor condition effectively, initial base line information is required in order that comparisons can be made and, consequently, an evaluation of change over time. Monitoring and subsequent evaluation requires resources and it is therefore crucial that those attributes, or features, of the AONB that are a meaningful measure of AONB quality are chosen. These form a suite of indicators that can be measured, monitored and evaluated over time.

Guidance has been produced by the Countryside Agency (CA 2003) and research undertaken by the South West Protected Landscapes Forum (October 2003) on indicators and their selection. The guidance suggests that indicators that measure the quality of AONB condition should be:

- Expressed in terms that the public can relate to and understand
- Relevant to issues and policies highlighted within the Management Plan
- Capable of replication to show trends and change over time and permit the identification of base-lines or benchmarks
- Applicable at a range of scales in order that information can be split down to a parish or ward level and also be understood at a county, regional or national level



- Based on standard procedures wherever possible to contribute to national or regional information sets and to enable comparisons, for example, with adjacent areas or with other AONBs
- Complementary to, or integrated with, other indicators, including the Rural Communities Commission's 'State of the Countryside' reports

Monitoring Indicators for Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs

A set of AONB indicators was created following the publication of the 2004 Management Plan. This data is the basis of a 'State of the AONB' report. The final set of indicators was selected to offer effective information on the changing condition of AONB's special qualities. Experience shows that for many of the chosen indicators, there are now difficulties in securing reliable base-line data. Only three of the original indicators have reliable data for comparison between 2004 and 2008. Therefore, a modified set of indicators is presented in this Management Plan and comprises a combination of indicators from Natural England guidance, research undertaken by the South West Protected Landscapes Forum and from the AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2003. The set of indicators chosen has been rationalised to ensure:

- the data will be available
- the indicators chosen will offer improved condition monitoring

The table in Figure 13 details AONB-wide indicators that focus mainly on the resource elements of the AONB. These are chiefly environmental indicators, reflecting the primary, environmental nature of AONB designation. In addition, indicators are suggested for activities or pressures within the AONB, that tend to be social and/or economic in nature and more usually out of the direct, or even indirect, control of the AONB Partnership.

The table in Figure 14 outlines ten indicators relevant to the Landscape Character Areas of the AONB.

Figure 13: AONB-wide Indicators

Headline Topic	Indicator	Data Source
Landscape Character		
Positive landscape management schemes	No. of hectares in new EWGS schemes annually	Natural England / Forestry Commission
Open, distant, panoramic views	Changes in key views	Fixed point photography
Sense of remoteness and tranquillity	Extent of dark night skies and tranquil areas	SWID, CPRE, Skyglow map
Design of built development 'fitting local character'	Number of published Design Guides adopted as SPG / Number of Village Design Statements prepared	District Councils
Agriculture		
Land use change	Main land uses	June Agricultural Census
Amount of grazing stock	Livestock statistics	June Agricultural Census
Management of wildlife rich arable farmland	Number of ELS Agreements that include Arable Options EF1 - EF11	Natural England
Historic Environment		
AONB Historic Environment Assets	Number of registered Parks and Gardens, SAMs, Listed Buildings in the AONB	English Heritage / SWID
	Number of sites or features locally designated within AONB	District Councils
	Number of Conservation Areas with Conservation Area appraisals	District Councils
AONB Heritage Assets at Risk	SAMs at Risk Buildings at Risk Registered Parks and Gardens at Risk	SWID
Biodiversity		
Number and extent of important and distinctive habitats	Change in SSSI Condition	Magic, SWID
	Changes in condition in local Sites (SINC, SNCI, CWS, RIGS)	HBIC, DERC, SWBRC already provide data
Population and distribution of important and distinctive species	New records for the list of 84 important and BAP species in Wiltshire	Supplied from SWBRC
Positive conservation management of local wildlife sites	NI 197 - Improved Local Biodiversity - proportion of Local Sites where active conservation management is being achieved	Local Authority returns to DEFRA
Water quality		
Water quality	Up take of O/ELS Options EE7/EE8, EJ1, EJ2, EK2, EK3 and HLS Options HJ3, HJ4, HJ5, HJ6, HJ7, HJ8	Natural England
	Number of pollution incidents recorded	SWID
Recreation and Access		
Ease of accessibility of Rights of Way	Progress reports from County Councils of ROWIP programmes	County Council RoW Teams
Increase in visitor numbers	Numbers of visitors to specific sites	National Trust, County Council RoW Teams
Services and facilities		
Access to local services	Number of facilities and services within settlements and surrounds of the AONB	Need to purchase OS Points of Interest data base - cost implications.
Population		
Age / structure of the population	Population pyramids recorded annually	Mid-year population estimates available from UK Statistics Authority
Awareness		
Awareness of designation and purpose	Percentage of residents who know they are within an AONB	3 yearly survey completed by an outside company, or possibly also at Woodfair bi-annually
	Percentage of residents who know the name	
	Percentage of residents who know what the purpose of designation is	
	Percentage of visitors who know they are within an AONB	



Figure 14: Landscape Character Areas

	Potential changes	Indicators	Character Area affected	Data source
1	Extent of chalk grassland	Area of chalk grassland in and out of HLS	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 3A, 4A, 5A, 5B, 5C	Natural England
2	Extent of woodland planted on farmland	Hectares of woodland creation supported by EWGS or HLS on farmland	2A, 2B, 3A, 4A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, 8A	Natural England & Forestry Commission
3	Change from conifer woodland to mixed or broadleaf woodland	Area of pure conifer as a percentage of woodland cover	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 3A, 4A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 8A	AONB Woodland map
4	Reinstatement of traditional management techniques such as coppicing or water meadow operation	Uptake of HLS Agreements that include Options HD7, HD8, HD9, HD10, HD11	All Agreements	
5	Hedgerow condition	Number of HLS agreements that include Option HB12 and ELS agreements that include Option EB3	All Agreements	Natural England
6	Losses of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland	Number of HLS agreements that include Options HC7 and HC8, HC15, HC16 and HC17	All Agreements	
7	Extent and condition of valley and vale pastures	Hectares in ELS Options EK1 and EK5	4A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, 8A	Natural England
8	Veteran trees	Number of HLS agreements that include options HL5 and HL6, HL12 and HL13	All areas	Natural England
9	Tall structures such as communication masts and wind turbines	Number of applications and schemes granted planning permission	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 3A, 4A	
10	Demand for residential development	Number of planning applications for residential development	All areas but particularly - 5A, 5B, 5C and 8A	



Appendices

"I'd like the same
peace and quiet
I've known for the
last 40 years"

Sixpenny Handley, 2nd June 2003

Appendix 1:

How has the 2004-2009 Management Plan been reviewed?

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires Local Authorities involved in AONB management, to review jointly the Management Plan at five yearly intervals. In May 2007, the Partnership Panel agreed that all relevant issues had been raised during the major public participation process undertaken for the first plan 2004-09 although new legislation should be recognised and potentially major topics, such as climate change, merited far greater emphasis in the reviewed plan 2009-14. The structure of the 2004 plan and the original, rather over ambitious 'Action Plan' also required reviewing, to ensure 'actions' were more precise and achievable.

The process involved the use of various questionnaires and debate amongst the Partnership Panel, AONB Topic Groups, Technical Advice Group, AONB Team and attendees of the Annual Forum event. The questionnaire was sent to over 600 potential respondents with 66 replies received.

Taking into consideration all the comments offered through this process, the AONB Team then redrafted relevant sections. The Technical Advice Group (TAG) agreed that the 'Vision' and 'Aims' of the original 2004-09 Plan should remain unaltered, having being determined from an extensive programme of public participation during 2001-03. The 'Aims' have been called 'Community Priorities' in the 2009-14 Plan to better reflect their origin.

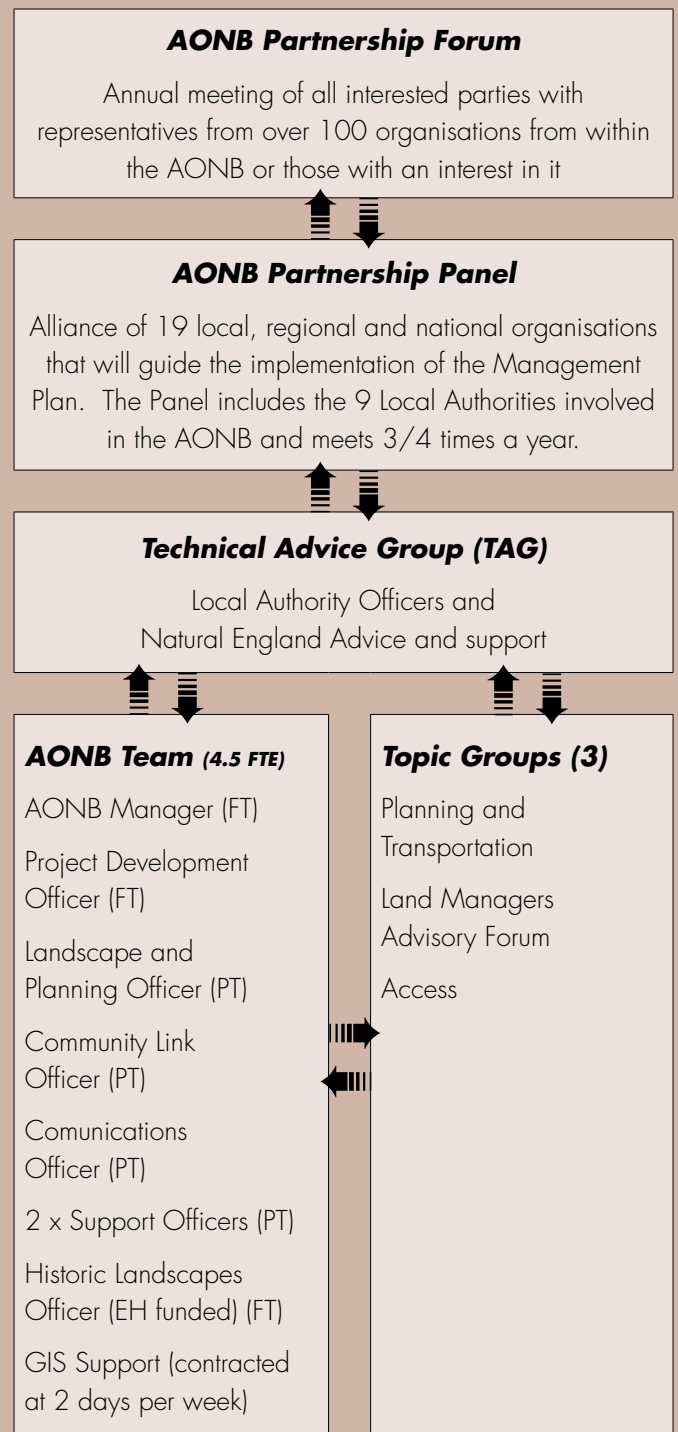
A consultant, Paul Tiplady, undertook to collate the new plan, and review its structure. Paul Tiplady and the AONB Team worked through several versions of a draft Plan, up until September 2008.

During a second period of consultation, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs draft AONB Management Plan 2009-14 was received by 233 respondents, with around 20 responses received in the AONB office for consideration.

The Management Plan 2009-14 was endorsed by the Partnership Panel on 9th December 2008 and subsequently adopted by the Local Authorities involved, in time for the deadline of 1st April 2009.

Appendix 2:

Partnership Structure



Appendix 3:

Organisations represented on the Partnership Panel

Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Representation on the AONB Partnership Panel from 1st April 2009

The Partnership Panel is an alliance of 19 local, regional and national organisations which is steering the implementation of the Management Plan.

- Chairman: Dr Richard Potts

One Member and/or one Officer from the nine Local Authorities:

- Wiltshire Council
- Dorset County Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Somerset County Council
- East Dorset District Council
- North Dorset District Council
- New Forest District Council
- Mendip District Council
- South Somerset District Council

One representative from those organisations with a specialist, regional or national interest in the AONB:

- Natural England
- English Heritage
- South West Tourism
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Forestry Commission
- Environment Agency

Those organisations with a local or community interest in the AONB:

- The Country Land and Business Association (1 representative)
- National Farmers Union (2 representatives)
- Wiltshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (1 representative)
- Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils (1 representative)

Appendix 4:

Policy context

This Management Plan has been prepared within an international, national, regional and local framework of other strategies and plans. How does it 'fit' within the array of current and emerging plans?

- Integration - This Plan seeks to integrate with other statutory plans and strategies that have influence over the area. It can highlight those policies that have direct bearing on the primary purpose of AONB designation, emphasising their importance and relevance to the area. It is a two-way process, through which the AONB Management Plan and other strategies can reflect, inform and support each other. All plans and policies that relate to the AONB and surrounding areas have been consulted in the preparation of this Plan, that seeks, in turn, to influence other plans and policies where appropriate.
- Shared aspirations - The Plan does not seek to override other strategies and plans, but to build on them, presenting the highest shared aspirations for the AONB. Whilst incorporating and supporting best practice from other plans, the AONB Plan endeavours to go beyond other plan objectives and policies in the best interests of the AONB.
- Sustainability - The primary purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, whilst accommodating the social and economic needs of local communities, is very close to the concept of sustainability. Sustainability can be defined as the management of change to meet equitably the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.

In the context of this Plan, sustainability means ensuring that environmental, economic and social needs can be met whilst conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

Selected European Directives and International Conventions

Directive, Plan, Strategy	(reference/published /produced)
The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg '02	www.un.org/jsummit/html/basic_info/basicinfo.html
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2000:327:0001:0072:EN:PDF
Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC)(06)	ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-nitrates/index_en.html
Aarhus Convention UNECE (1998)	www.unece.org/env/lrtap/hm_h1.htm
European Landscape Convention (UK ratified 2006)	www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/publications/treaty-command-papers-ems/explanatory-memoranda/explanatory-memoranda-2006a/euroland
The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979) (known as the Bonn Convention)	europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l28051.htm
The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) (known as the Bern Convention)	conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/104.htm
Convention on Biodiversity (1992)	europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l28102.htm
The EC Council Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds (1979) (known as the EC Birds Directive)	www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1373
The EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna & Flora (1992) (Directive 92/43/EC) (known as the EC Habitats Directive)	www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1374
EU Biodiversity Strategy (1998)	ec.europa.eu/environment/docum/pdf/com_98_42_en.pdf
Agenda 21 (1992)	www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/index.htm
Kyoto Protocol (1997)	unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php
EU 6th Environmental Action Plan (2002)	ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm
EC Sustainable Development Strategy Revision (2005)	ec.europa.eu/sustainable/docs/sec2005_0225_en.pdf
EC Spatial Perspective (1999)	ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/som_en.htm
EC Air Quality Framework Directive (96/62/EC).	www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/eu-int/eu-directives/airqual-directives/index.htm
EC Directive to Promote Electricity from Renewable Energy (2001/77/EC).	eurlex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_283/l_28320011027en00330040.pdf
Rural Development Plan for England (2007-13)	www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/index.htm

National

Directive, Plan, Strategy	(reference/published /produced)
The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 & amendments)	www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20041487.htm
The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (1994 & Amendments)	www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1379
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)	www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000037_en_1
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)	www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060016_en_1
Environment Act (1995)	www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/Ukpga_19950025_en_1
The UK Climate Change Programme (2006)	www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/pdf/ukccp06-all.pdf
Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act (2006)	www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/pdf/ukpga_20060019_en.pdf
Securing the Future – Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2006)	www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/publications/pdf/strategy/SecFut_complete.pdf
Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans	www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commonddata/acrobat/cfmp_1426671.pdf

Directive, Plan, Strategy	(reference/published /produced)
Environment Agency Catchment Abstraction Plans	www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/resources/abstraction/ www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commodata/acrobat/cams_briefing_note_1622443.pdf
Energy White Paper (2003) 1	www.berr.gov.uk/files/file10719.pdf
Waste Strategy for England and Wales (2000)	www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060937.htm
Agricultural Waste Regulations (2000)	www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060937.htm
Transport Strategy (2000)	www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/transporttenyearplan2000
Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002)	www.ukbap.org.uk/EBG/england_biodiversity_strategy.asp
Hedgerow Regulations (1997)	www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1997/19971160.htm
Farming and Food Strategy (2002)	www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/strategy.htm
Rural Strategy (2004)	www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/strategy/rural_strategy_2004.pdf
Natural England Strategic Direction (2007)	www.naturalengland.org.uk/pdf/about/Natural_England_Strategic_Direction.pdf
Waste Strategy (2007)	www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/waste/strategy/strategy07/index.htm
Sustainable Communities Plan (2003)	www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=633
The First Soil Action Plan for England (2004)	www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/land/soil/pdf/soilactionplan.pdf
England's Coastal Heritage - Policy Statement by English Heritage (1996)	www.eng-h.gov.uk/archcom/projects/summaries/html96_7/1574str.htm
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)	www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/en/ukpgaen_20060016_en_1
Joint Statement on the Historic Environment English Heritage CADW and NAAONB (2004)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Joint_Statement.pdf
Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (2007)	www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/climate-report
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)	www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningpolicystatement1
Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (2001)	www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicyguidancegreenbelts/
Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)	www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planning/planningcountryside/pps7/
Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)	www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/historicenvironment/pps9/
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (2001)	www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/historicenvironment/ppg15/
Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (2001)	www.planning-applications.co.uk/ppg16_archaeologyandplanning.pdf
Good Practice on Planning for Tourism (2006)	www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/goodpracticeguide
Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy (2004)	www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/pps22/
Planning Policy Statement 25 – Development and Flood Risk (2006)	www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/pps25/
Community Strategy - Local Government Act (2002)	www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/4667.aspx
The Historic Environment: A Force our Future - DCMS (2001)	
The Power of Place: The Future of the Historic Environment - English Heritage (2000)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1447
Discovering the Past: Shaping the Future. Research Strategy 2005-2010 - English Heritage (2005)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Research_Strategy.pdf

Directive, Plan, Strategy	(reference/published /produced)
English Heritage Research Agenda: An introduction to English Heritage's Research Themes and Programmes - English Heritage (2005)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Research_Agenda.pdf
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment. - English Heritage (08)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Conservation_Principles_Policies_and_Guidance_April08_Web.pdf

Regional

Directive, Plan, Strategy	(reference/published /produced)
Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy 2006	www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=836
Draft South East Regional Spatial Strategy 2006	www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/
SW Woodlands and Forestry Framework 2005-2015	www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry.INFD-7BCJ3X
SW Biodiversity Action Plan 2006	www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=476
SW Nature Map 2004	www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/nature_map.asp
Action for Biodiversity in the South West - A Series of Habitat and Species Plans to Guide Delivery (1997)	www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=476
Revision 2010: Empowering the Region – Renewable Energy Targets for the South West (2004)	www.oursouthwest.com/revision2010/2010brochure.pdf
The Way Ahead: Delivering Sustainable Communities in the South West (2005)	www.southwestrda.org.uk/downloads/document.asp?lang=&documentid=656&
Culture South West, In Search of Chunky Dunsters: A Cultural Strategy for the South West (2001)	www.culturesouthwest.org.uk/downloads/file.asp?Filename=Chunky%20Dunster.pdf
Joining Up: Culture South West Report 2004	www.culturesouthwest.org.uk/downloads/list.asp?CategoryID=41
A Strategy for the Historic Environment in the South West (2004)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/sw_strategy_HE2004.pdf
Regional Economic Strategy for the South West of England 2006-2015 (2006)	www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/res-review2005/draft-res.shtml
South West Archaeological Research Framework. Resource Assessment and Research Agenda - Somerset County Council (2008)	www.somerset.gov.uk/media/4D9/F9/swarfweb.pdf
Heritage Counts: The State of the South West's Historic Environment - English Heritage (2008)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc/upload/pdf/HC08_SouthWest_Acc.pdf
Southwest 2008 Climate Change Report - English Heritage (2008)	www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc/upload/pdf/South_West_Heritage_Counts_2008_climate_change.pdf
Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for SW England (2003-10)	www.swcore.co.uk/sff/documents/RenewableEnergyStrategy2003-2010.pdf
Regional Waste Strategy for the SW (2004-20)	www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=500
Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10)	www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/Transport/RPG10Fulltext.pdf
Towards 2015 - Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism (2005)	www.towards2015.co.uk/
Integrated Regional Framework - A better quality of life in the South East (2004)	www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sustainability_irf.html
Our Environment: Our Future - The Regional Strategy for the South West Environment (2004-14)	www.seeda.org.uk/RES_for_the_South_East_2006-2016/RES_2002-2012/index.asp
Regional Economic Strategy (2002-2012)	www.seeda.co.uk/RES_for_the_South_East_2006-2016/RES_2002-2012/docs/RES_Main_Web.pdf
A Sustainable Future for the South West - A Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the SW of England (2001)	www.oursouthwest.com/RegiSus/framework/framework.htm

Local

Directive, Plan, Strategy	(reference/published /produced)
Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2006	www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning-home/planning-saved-local-plans/planning-structure-plan.htm
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan 2000	www.bournemouth.gov.uk/Residents/pc_dc/Policy/Regional/Bournemouth_Dorset_&_Poole_Structure_Plan.asp
Hampshire Structure Plan 1996	www.hants.gov.uk/structureplanfile/fullversion/3plan.html
Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Structure Plan 1991	www.somerset.gov.uk/enprop/strucplan/review3.htm
East Dorset District Local Plan (Saved Policies)(2002)	www.dorsetforyou.com/index.jsp?articleid=387356
North Dorset Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2003	www.northdorsetlocalplan.co.uk/maps/toptitle.htm
West Wiltshire Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2001	www.cartoplus.co.uk/west_wiltshire/intro.htm
Salisbury Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2003	www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning/forward-planning/local-plan/adopted-local-plan.htm
New Forest Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2005	www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=951
Mendip Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2002	www.mendip.gov.uk/CouncilService.asp?id= SX9452-A77F9DE9
South Somerset Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2006	www.southsomerset.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=2094
Dorset AONB Management Plan 2004-8 and draft 2009-14	www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/text01.asp?Pagelid=351
New Forest National Park Plan (Draft) (2008)	www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/index/aboutus/consultations/national_park_plan.htm

Appendix 5 -

Publications available on the AONB website

Online documents to be found at: www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk

Documents that can be read online or downloaded are:

- All Partnership and Topic Group minutes
 - AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2003
 - Landscape Sensitivity Report 2007
 - Historic Landscape Characterisation 2008
 - 'Raising Our Game' – conclusions from a game conservation survey 2007
 - The Legal Record of Rights of Way 2007
 - The CCWWD AONB Planning Protocol 2005
 - Commissioned Planning Reports:
 - Planning Protocol
 - Market Towns Growth
 - Roads and Planning
 - Guide to Permitted Development Rights
 - Light Pollution Study
 - AONB Position Statement 1 - Light Pollution
 - AONB Position Statement 2 - Historic Parks and Gardens
 - AONB Position Statement 3 - Relevance of the Setting of the AONB
 - Fact Sheet and Good Practice Note 1- CRoW Act 2000, Section 85
 - Fact Sheet and Good Practice Note 2 - Local Planning and LDF
 - Fact Sheet and Good Practice Note 3 - European Landscape Convention
 - Fact Sheet and Good Practice Note 4 - Historic Landscape Characterisation
 - Copies of The Hart
 - Our Outstanding Natural Playground – visitors leaflet
 - Our Outstanding Local Enterprises – local business details and contacts
 - Green Fuels Fact Sheet
 - A Guide to Small Scale Biomass Heating Projects (South Wood Fuel Advice Service)
 - Various documents relating to the 'Sowing SEEDS' bid for Leader funding
- Initial questionnaire regarding review of the 2004/09 Management Plan
 - The Chase, The Hart and The Park

An exploration of the historic landscape of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Edited by Katherine Barker.

Based on papers given at a one-day seminar held in Sixpenny Handley in November 2006. With contributions by: Katherine Barker, Gordon Le Pard, Caroline Cheeseman, Martin Green, John Gale and Dorothy Ireland
 - Europarc Atlantic Isles News
 - Copies of Wiltshire Wayfarer
 - AONB Annual Reports
 - Parish Newsletters
 - The Trees and Woodlands of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs: a landscape view

Appendix 6 -

AONB Planning Protocol

Planning Protocol for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Purpose

This Protocol sets out how the AONB Partnership and local authorities will consider planning matters affecting the AONB.

Background

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Partnership's primary task is taking forward the objective of conserving the natural beauty of the landscape. AONB's are regarded as equivalent to National Parks in terms of their landscape quality, scenic beauty and their planning status. All public bodies and statutory undertakers must have regard to the purposes of AONBs in performing their statutory functions.

In 2004 the AONB Partnership produced a Management Plan for the AONB which sets out the overall vision, objectives and action plans for the area up to 2009. The Planning Protocol should be implemented having regard to the objectives and policies of the Management Plan.

Local Authority Planning Responsibilities

In summary the planning responsibilities of the local authorities are as follow;

County Councils

Preparation of Minerals and Waste Local Development Frameworks

Preparation of Structure Plans under the transitional arrangements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

Determining planning applications for mineral extraction and related development, waste management.

Determining planning applications for the County Council's own development (e.g. roads, schools etc).

Provision of monitoring and survey information and advice to the Regional Planning Body on strategic issues and the conformity of Local Development Documents with the

Regional Spatial Strategy.

County Councils are also responsible for the preparation of Local Transport Plans.

District Councils

1. Establishing planning policies and strategies through the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and supporting documents
2. Determination of the majority of planning applications for
 - House extensions and alterations
 - Residential development
 - Employment, leisure and shopping development
 - Engineering operations
 - Telecommunication and energy schemes
 - Agricultural buildings
 - Change of use of land or a building
3. Raising objection/no objection on circular 18/84 applications (Crown Lands - includes Duchy of Cornwall development).
4. Also determining whether prior notification of design and siting is required for:
 - Telecommunication schemes under part 24 of the GPDO;
 - Agricultural buildings under part 6 of the GPDO.

The Planning Authority's role

The planning authority will

1. Invite comments or contributions in respect of all consultations on relevant planning policy documents which impact on the AONB. This will include inviting an appropriate representative of the AONB Partnership to be involved in relevant consultation events or Forum meetings which may be arranged. A list of planning policy documents is included within Appendix A1.
2. Make available a copy of the weekly planning application list for the AONB Manager within 7 days of publication.
3. Send a standard consultation to the AONB Manager inviting comments on all major¹ applications within the AONB or those which are likely to impact significantly on the AONB landscape character. A schedule of major applications is provided in Appendix A1.

1. As defined in the General Development Procedure Order 1995.

4. Where appropriate, will consult the AONB Team during pre-application discussions or in the preparation of development briefs.
5. Take account of AONB matters and, where appropriate, will liaise with the AONB team regarding Planning Appeals and seek contributions on significant planning matters affecting the AONB.

The AONB Partnership's role

The AONB Partnership will;

1. Review and consider consultation documents prepared as part of the Local Development Framework preparation and other relevant documents. Where appropriate undertake further consultation with relevant Local Authority and AONB officers and prepare and submit written comments to the Local Planning Authority within the given timescales.
2. Scan weekly planning applications lists and identify any relevant applications for comments. Where the AONB Partnership wish to comment on an application, such request should be made to the local authority within 7 days of the weekly list becoming available.
3. In consultation with appropriate case officers, landscape architects and urban designers, arrange site visits and submit comments on planning applications or consultations received from Planning Authorities that may have a significant impact on the character of the AONB within 21 days of the date of consultation (unless otherwise specified or agreed with the Local Planning Authority). The AONB Partnership understand that where responses are not submitted to the local authority within the specified time limit then they may not be taken account of in determining the planning application.
4. Where appropriate, will provide contributions towards Planning Appeals, where there are significant planning issues for the AONB.
5. Operate a scheme of delegation for providing comments on planning matters as set out in Appendix A2.
6. Work with local planning authorities to raise the profile of the AONB and develop tools which will aid policy formulation and decision making, such as landscape sensitivity/capacity, policy statements, and design guidance .

AONB Criteria

In considering planning matters the AONB Partnership will ensure that the primary concern of responses to the local authorities is the purpose of statutory designation of the AONB - the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape. In forming a view it will, however, also take account of the economic and social needs of local communities, where these are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the landscape.

The Partnership will only concern itself with applications, or aspects of applications, which it considers are likely to raise significant planning issues for the AONB as set out above. These will mainly relate to major applications or those which would set an unacceptable precedent within the AONB.

The AONB unit will not generally respond to requests by members of the public or other organisations to comment on minor applications, unless they raise significant planning issues for the AONB.

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Partnership comprises a wide range of agencies from private sector to local government. As such, whilst comments made on behalf of the AONB Partnership are representative of the Partnership's view as a whole, the comments made will not necessarily be consistent with the views of individual organisations represented on the Partnership. Any individual organisation on the AONB Partnership may reserve the right to disassociate themselves from any particular comments put forward on behalf of the AONB Partnership from time to time, subject to their declared interests.

Agreement

This Protocol has been endorsed by the AONB Partnership Panel on 11th May 2005 and minor amendments agreed by the Planning Topic Group on 7th October 2005.

Signed on behalf of the constituent Authorities:

- Wiltshire County Council
- Dorset County Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Somerset County Council
- Salisbury District Council
- West Wiltshire District Council
- East Dorset District Council
- North Dorset District Council
- New Forest District Council
- Mendip District Council
- South Somerset District Council

Appendix 6 cont...

Appendix A.1 Scope of consultations

Planning Policy

The protocol includes the following documents prepared in relation to Local Development Frameworks

Development Plan documents including;

- Core strategies
- Proposals Maps
- Generic Policies
- Area Action Plans
- Other topic based Development Plan Documents
- Structure Plans/Local Plans and modifications relating to them (prepared under the transitional arrangements)

Supplementary Planning Documents where these provide guidance relevant to part or all of the AONB (e.g. rural design)

Statements of Community Involvement

Sustainability Appraisals/Strategic Environmental Assessments (where there is considered by the local authority to be significant issues relating to the AONB)

The protocol covers related planning policy documents

- Landscape Character Assessments
- Village Design Statements
- Planning Concept Statements and Development Briefs
- Other Planning guidance produced which is of relevance to the AONB.
- Local Transport Plans

Planning Applications

The protocol will cover the following types of "major" planning applications received by local authorities;

Residential Development - applications involving 10 or more dwellings (or where the number of dwellings is not indicated) or where the site is more than 0.5 Ha.

Other Development - where the floor space proposed is more than 1000 square metres or where the site is more than 1 Ha.

Minerals and Waste Management: All applications involving new or extended mineral extraction areas, or the restoration of old or existing sites, or any site used for

the management of waste (including Review of Mineral Permissions (ROMPs))

Consultation should also take place on other applications which are likely to have a significant impact on the AONB Landscape Character.

Appendix A.2 Scheme of Delegation

The AONB Partnership Forum delegates to the AONB Team

Responsibility for deciding whether a consultation warrants a response on behalf of the Partnership.

Responsibility for deciding if a consultation should be referred to the Planning Topic Working Group. In general only consultations which give rise to significant issue(s) of principle or policy for the AONB or have a significant impact on the landscape character of the AONB should be referred.

Responsibility for providing a response on consultations not referred to the Planning Topic Working Group





Glossary and Explanation of Terms

“There’s a fantastic view
from Zig Zag Hill”

Damerham. 15th May 2003

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASNW	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
CA	Countryside Agency
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CLA	Country Land and Business Association
CPEND	Community Partnership Executive of North Dorset
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
CROW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
DBERR	Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EA	Environment Agency
EGWS	English Woodland Grant Scheme
EH	English Heritage
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ELS	Entry Level Stewardship
EN	English Nature
ERDP	England Rural Development Programme
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
ESS	Environmental Stewardship Scheme
EU	European Union
FC	Forestry Commission
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
GOSW	Government Office for the South West
GPDO	General Permitted Development Order
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
HER	Historic Environment Records
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
ICT	Information and communications technology
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JAC	Joint Advisory Committee
LA	Local Authority
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LCA	Local Character Assessment
LDD	Local Development Document

LDF	Local Development Framework
LDMO	Local Destination Management Organisation
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTP	Local Transport Plan
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
MPG	Minerals Planning Guidance
NAAONB	National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NNR	National Nature Reserve
PAWS	Planted Ancient Woodland Sites
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
RFF	Regional Forestry Framework
RIGGS	Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites
RoW	Rights of Way
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAMs	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
SDF	Sustainable Development Fund
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SERA	South East England Regional Assembly
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SMR	Sites and Monuments Register
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SRA	Strategic Rail Authority
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SUSTRANS	The Sustainable Transport Charity
SWID	South West Intelligence Database
SWRA	South West Regional Assembly
SWRDA	South West of England Regional Development Agency
WGS	Woodland Grant Scheme

Explanation of Terms

Adapting to climate change means the changing of behaviour to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (formerly known as Appropriate Assessment) is required by the Birds and Habitats Directives of the European Union to assess the effects of a plan on a nature conservation site of European importance to enable a judgement to be made as to whether there will be an adverse effect on the site's integrity.

Agricultural land classification is the method of grading agricultural land used by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Chartered Surveyors to describe the productive quality of farmland.

Agri-environment schemes refers to a range of schemes operated by Natural England which are designed to encourage environmentally friendly farming and public enjoyment of the countryside.

An **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** is an area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, with the primary purpose of designation being to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Biodiversity means 'biological diversity' and includes the whole variety of life on earth in all its forms, or any part of it and its interaction.

Catchment Sensitive Farming is a scheme to encourage farmers to work together throughout a river catchment to improve water quality, flow rates and wildlife habitat.

Category V Landscape refers to Category V (Protected: Landscape/Seascapes) of lived-in landscapes in the United Nations List of Protected Areas. These areas are characterised by their scenic beauty, for example, as mountain, hill, wetland and coastal scenery.

Community Plans or Strategies are intended to reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities, and set out future visions for those communities. There is wide diversity in their form, arising from the fact that they are produced under non-statutory procedures and the processes by which they are prepared are still evolving.

Community Infrastructure Levy is a standard charge to be levied on new developments. It used to be known as a Developer Contribution, and was linked to a Section 106 Agreement. Its purpose is to fund the provision of infrastructure and community facilities identified as being required to support the increase in development.

Decoupling refers to breaking the direct link between the production of agricultural crops and the financial support for farming from the EU.

Geodiversity covers the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals and natural processes within an area.

Geomorphology is the study of landforms, or of the arrangement and forms of the earth's crust.

A **habitat** provides the resources that any living thing requires to survive and sustain a population

The **Heritage At Risk Register** is compiled by English Heritage and contains information on the Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, and other nationally designated heritage which is at risk in England.

Historic Environment Record is a mainly local authority based service which contains information about historic buildings, archaeological sites and finds. These records were previously known as Sites and Monuments Records or SMRs: the name has changed to reflect the wider scope of the data they now contain.

Historic Landscape Characterisation is an archaeological method that studies the historic landscape character present in today's landscape.

Indicators are ways of quantifying and measuring the impact of policy objectives.

The **International Union for Conservation of Natural Resources** (IUCN) is the World Conservation Union.

Landscape Character Assessment is a technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives the landscapes of England their special character. It uses a structured approach to describe and assess the character of landscapes, including

features that are locally distinctive and those that contribute to the special sense of place of a locality. Landscape Character Assessments can be at broad national scales as well as more detailed at County, AONB, or District scale.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and that local area, ie the Local Authority, Local Strategic Partnership and other key partners at the local level.

Local Development Frameworks are the new approach to Local Plans, carried out by the local planning authority. The LDF consists of a Core Strategy and range of Development Plan Documents that provide policy statements and guidance for development control decisions.

Local Strategic Partnerships are non-statutory bodies that aim to bring together local organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

Local Transport Plans define five-year strategies for transport provision. County councils and unitary authorities prepare them for their areas.

Mitigation for climate change is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, from whatever source that can be managed.

Modulation is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) principle whereby funds from Pillar 1 (direct payments to farmers) are transferred to Pillar 2 (rural development).

Natural beauty includes the landscape, flora and fauna, geological or physiographical features and heritage, including archaeology, historic environment and settlement character.

A **Parish Plan** sets out a vision of how local communities would like their town or village to be. They tend to be much more holistic or all encompassing, now replacing the older 'village appraisal' approach.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) are the Government's national guidance for land use planning. There is also a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for each of the two regions within which the AONB is located and a series of Minerals Planning Guidance notes (MPGs).

The **Planning Protocol** sets out how the AONB Partnership and local authorities have agreed they will consider planning matters affecting the AONB.

A **Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** provides a regional level planning framework and guidance for each of the regions of England. It replaces the old Structure Plans which were prepared at a county scale.

The **South West Protected Landscapes Forum** encourages networking and exchange of information and ideas between the two National Parks and 12 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the South West region.

Strategic Environmental Assessment is to be required based on a European Directive intended to promote sustainable development, by ensuring that an environmental assessment is carried out for certain plans and programmes that are likely to have significant impacts upon the environment.

A **Supplementary Planning Document** is prepared by local authorities to amplify and support policies in statutory development plans. It must link directly to a policy, or policies, in a Local Development Document and be subjected to adequate consultation.

Sustainability has been defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as 'development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

The **Sustainable Development Fund** is the small grants scheme that the AONB uses to support innovative projects that have a positive impact on the community and environment of the locality.

Village Design Statements are documents that describe the visual character of a village as seen through the eyes of its inhabitants. Residents of an interested village volunteer to undertake a study of their village and its environment and through consultation and discussion determine what they feel this to be.



Credits

This Plan was prepared and published by the CCWWD AONB Partnership which would like to acknowledge the 75% grant aid given by Natural England towards its production. The eleven Local Authorities (prior to 1st April 2009) involved in the Partnership provided the 25% match funding. The full composition of the Partnership is given on page 76.

The AONB Partnership would also like to extend its sincere thanks once again to the many parish councils, local communities, farmers, landowners, managers, organisations and interest groups who contributed to this Plan. Their involvement in the process has provided its foundation and substance. This Plan is for everyone who enjoys, lives or works in this nationally Protected Area.

The Partnership would like to thank Paul Tiplady, who worked closely with the AONB Team, Topic Groups, Technical Advice Group and the Partnership as a whole, to draw up the final draft Management Plan.

Figure 8 – from the Landscape Character Assessment, courtesy of Land Use Consultants, London

Figure 5 – AONB Management Plan 2004-9

Figure 6 – Natural England, 2008

Figure 12 – South West Protected Landscape Forum, 2008

Map production courtesy of GIS contractor Harry Bell of Jubilee Computing Services Ltd

Quotes:

- Pages 10, 12, 14, 18, 20, 26, 42, 50, 68, 74 and 86 - Courtesy of local communities within Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB
- Chafin, W (1818) Anecdotes and History of Cranborne Chase, publisher unknown
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- Massingham, HJ (1936), The English Downland, Batsford, London
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The AONB Partnership offers sincere thanks to the following officers for undertaking the work indicated. These documents are required by law to be completed alongside this Management Plan and can be found on the AONB web site and/or on the Management Plan CD.

Matthew Pearson, Wiltshire Council: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

Fiona Elphick, Wiltshire Council: Habitat Regulations Assessment

Garry King, Wiltshire Council and Hampshire County Council: Equality Impact Assessment