

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY, SKILLS AND TRANSPORT –
CLLR FLEUR DE RHÉ-PHILIPPE**

WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE

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REFERENCE: EST-002-14

**NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
MANAGEMENT PLAN – FORMAL ADOPTION**

Purpose of Report

1. To formally adopt, on behalf of Wiltshire Council, the Final Draft of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2014-19.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The report contributes to the Council's key priorities and actions as detailed in the Council's Business Plan 2013 – 2017 supporting the Council's vision of creating stronger more resilient communities.

Main Considerations for the Council

3. The main consideration is to formally adopt the reviewed AONB Management Plan so that it can be presented to the Secretary of State.

Background

4. Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 includes a statutory requirement for all AONBs to have Management Plans prepared and published by their Local Authorities or Conservation Boards. As such, the first North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2004-09 was produced.
5. Part IV, Section 89 of the CRoW Act, as amended by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires that relevant Local Authorities formally review these Management Plans after a period of five years. This requires the AONB to review its original Management Plan and the amended version be adopted by all the relevant Local Authorities. This is then submitted to the Secretary of State for endorsement.
6. The Draft Management Plan has been through an extensive consultation process with all members of the AONB Partnership, which includes:
 - Nine relevant local authorities
 - Natural England
 - English Heritage
 - Environment Agency
 - Forestry Commission
 - South West Tourism
 - Wiltshire and Dorset Associations of Town and Parish Councils
 - National Farmers Union (NFU)
 - Country Land and Business Association (CLA)
 - Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)

The results of extensive public consultation from the previous Management Plan have also been considered in the construction of the reviewed plan.

7. The Management Plan has been the subject of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment screening. No substantive changes are required to be made to the Management Plan as a result of these assessments.

Safeguarding Considerations

8. There are no Safeguarding considerations due to this proposal.

Public Health Implications

9. Public Health supports the application. There is considerable evidence about the benefits to health arising from access to green spaces and engagement with the environment. Adopting and implementing the AONB Management Plan should ensure improved public access to the AONB.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

10. Adoption and subsequent implementation of the reviewed AONB Management Plan will provide clear Vision, Objectives, Policies and Actions for this nationally important landscape that will continue the co-ordinated and holistic approach to the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

11. There are no Equality issues due to this proposal.

Risk Assessment

12. A Risk Assessment is not applicable in this instance.

Financial Implications

13. The review of the AONB Management Plan has been achieved within existing budgets, 75% of which are funded by Natural England. Adoption of the reviewed Management Plan will place no obligation on Wiltshire Council to provide additional funding beyond current agreed through the Memorandum of Agreement.

Legal Implications

14. Wiltshire Council, along with the other relevant Local Authorities, is required through the CRoW Act 2000, as amended by the NERC Act 2006, to review its AONB Management Plans every five years, taking into consideration any comments received from the statutory consultees and to submit an adopted, reviewed Management Plan to the Secretary of State.

Options Considered

15. Adoption of the reviewed AONB Management Plan, allowing submission to the Secretary of State, will fulfil the Council's statutory obligations.

Reason for Proposal

16. To ensure that the reviewed AONB Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is adopted by the Council to enable its submission to the Secretary of State.

Proposal

17. That the reviewed North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-19 be formally adopted by Wiltshire Council.

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None