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**REPORT TO:** Policy and Resources Committee

**DATE:** 12 February 2009

**HEAD OF SERVICE:** Gary Housden, Head of Planning

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Jill Thompson – Forward Planning Manager

**SUBJECT:** Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan  
(2009-2014) Consultation Draft

**WARDS AFFECTED:** Those within the Howardian Hills Area of  
Outstanding Natural Beauty

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the publication of the consultation draft of the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-2014 and to agree this Council's response.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a. **That Members support the draft Management Plan and agree this Council's response as outlined in section 5.6 of this report.**

## **3.0 REASONS SUPPORTING DECISION**

- 3.1 There is a statutory duty on Local Authorities to prepare and have in place an up to date Management Plan for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in their area. Therefore it is appropriate that the Council provides a response to the current consultation.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In 1992 the Howardian Hills Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was established to guide and co-ordinate the management of the Howardian Hills AONB. The constituent Local Authorities agreed that the JAC should co-ordinate the production and implementation of the Management Plan for the Howardian Hills on their behalf.

- 4.2 Members will be aware that Ryedale District Council together with Hambleton District Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Local Parish Councils and other key stakeholders such as the National Farmers Union and English Nature are members of the Joint Advisory Committee. Day to day work is undertaken by the small team of staff in the AONB Unit.
- 4.3 The current AONB Management Plan was adopted by the constituent Local Authorities in 2004. It provides an agreed approach to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB based on partnership and co-operation, and provides an important framework to co-ordinate the plans and strategies of a range of partners. For example, one of the main ways that Ryedale District Council is involved in the delivery of the AONB Management Plan actions is through the implementation of its usual functions and duties under the Planning and Wildlife Acts, such as: protecting important wildlife sites, encouraging the production of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements by local communities, producing basic design guidance, undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals, promoting sustainable travel and providing appropriate policies for development in all relevant plans and strategies.
- 4.4 There is a statutory duty to review and adopt the AONB Management Plan every five years. The current consultation represents the second review of the AONB Management Plan which will roll the document forward to 2014.
- 4.5 The consultation on the draft Management Plan was from 7 November to 19 December 2008. The Joint Advisory Committee was advised last year that a formal response from Ryedale will be forwarded following this meeting.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that in February / March 2009 the JAC will consider the comments received on the draft Management Plan and will agree any changes. The JAC will then formally request that the constituent Local Authorities adopt the revised Management Plan. Therefore the final document will need to be formally adopted by Ryedale District Council to meet the statutory requirements for production.

## **5.0 REPORT**

- 5.1 A full version of the draft Management Plan is available to view in the Members Lounge. Annex B of this report provides the Vision and Key Vision Aims.
- 5.2 The draft Plan has been produced following ongoing consultation. Eight topic groups have been held with a range of stakeholders to consider specific issues. Four community / parish planning events were also held and discussions with farmers and land managers have taken place. The draft Plan has been informed by a range of technical

research papers including visitor and user surveys, ecological surveys and the like.

- 5.3 The broad principles of the draft Management Plan follow those of the current document. The overall vision for the AONB remains unchanged. With the exception of a new set of objectives covering sustainability and climate change, most of the objectives in the current Management Plan are rolled forward. New Objectives are identified in Annex B. The main changes largely relate to the updating and expanding the proposed actions which accompany each objective. The draft Plan does not look to fundamentally change the management of the AONB from the current Management Plan. Equally it is considered that there are no omissions from the Plan.
- 5.4 It should be noted that the proposed revisions to the Management Plan and in particular the revised actions do not commit the council to providing additional financial support to the AONB unit which is over and above the core funding that the Council currently contributes.
- 5.5 On the basis of the above, it is considered appropriate that the District Council support the revised plan.

### **Proposed Ryedale District Council Response**

- 5.6 The District Council fully supports the draft Management Plan which has been compiled with the engagement of a range of stakeholders. The new objectives and revised actions are welcomed.

### **6.0 OPTIONS**

- 6.1 The District Council will be required to adopt the final version of the Management Plan. Therefore it is appropriate that comments are made at this stage.

### **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no new additional financial implications associated with the report.

### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure a Management Plan for the AONB is in place.

### **9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Management Plan exists to ensure the appropriate conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB.

### **10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 The final Management Plan 2009-2014 will be published in March / April 2009 whereupon Ryedale District Council will need to consider the document for adoption. An agreed response at this stage will help to ensure that the preparation of the Plan progresses in accordance with the established timetable.

#### **11.0 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The recommendation is appropriate based on the issues outlined in the report.

**OFFICER CONTACT:** Please contact the Paula Craddock if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The Officer can be contacted at Ryedale House on 01653 600666 extn 309 or at [paula.craddock@ryedale.gov.uk](mailto:paula.craddock@ryedale.gov.uk)

**CORPORATE POLICY APPRAISAL FORM** *(One for each Option)*

**Annex A**

<b>Policy Context</b>	<b>Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Impact +ve -ve Neutral</b>
Community Plan Themes <i>(Identify any/all that apply)</i>	Landscape and Environment.	+ve
Corporate Objectives/Priorities <i>(Identify any/all that apply)</i>	Clean and sustainable built and natural environment.	+ve
Service Priorities	To benefit bio-diversity and the landscapes of the District by encouraging appropriate land management. To protect and enhance the historic built environment.	
Financial	No direct additional financial implications.	
Legal Implications	Addressed in the report.	
Procurement Policies	No implications.	
Asset Management Policies	No implications.	
LA21 & Environment Charter	No direct implications.	
Community Safety	No direct implications.	
Equalities	It is understood that the AONB Unit is undertaking an Enabling Assessment of the Plan.	
E-Government	No direct financial implications.	
Risk Assessment	No direct risks associated with the report.	
Estimated Timescale for achievement	Adoption in April 2009.	

**The Howardian Hills AONB draft Management Plan 2009-2014**

**The Vision**

The Howardian Hills will continue to be a tranquil and well-managed rural area. It will still be notable for its extensive woodland, rolling agricultural fields, large country houses and designed parklands. Natural and cultural resources will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy. Active communities will have increased opportunities for people of all ages to live and work in the area. Residents and visitors alike will be able to enjoy and appreciate the AONB in an environmentally sustainable way.

**The Key Vision Aims**

- Farming and forestry will be sustainable both economically and environmentally.
- All SSSIs will be in Favourable Condition, with the long-standing water quality issues on the River Derwent resolved.
- All Ancient Woodland SINCs will have been restored, or be in the process of restoration, to native broadleaves.
- All grassland SINCs will be in sustainable grazing/ cutting management regimes.
- All Heritage Assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens) will be in sustainable management, in the Low Risk category.
- There will be a more diverse mix of housing units/ tenures and more services will be delivered at community level, reducing the need to travel.
- Where travel is necessary, a network of public and community transport links will be in place to cater for the majority of needs.
- Personal transport is still likely to be important, but will be powered by more sustainable fuels.
- All Rights of Way will be easy to use, with barriers that provide the minimum of obstruction to all types of user.
- A wide cross-section of society will enjoy and appreciate the special qualities of the AONB, for their intrinsic value and for the physical and mental stimulation they provide.