



REPORT TO:	COUNCIL
DATE:	6 MARCH 2014
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF PLANNING AND HOUSING GARY HOUSDEN
TITLE OF REPORT:	HOWARDIAN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY: MANAGEMENT PLAN (2014-2019)
WARDS AFFECTED:	AMOTHERBY, AMPLEFORTH, DERWENT, HELMSLEY, HOVINGHAM, RYEDALE SOUTH WEST, SHERIFF HUTTON AND SINNINGTON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has prepared a revised Management Plan to cover the period 2014-2019.
- 1.2 This report is for Members to consider the formal adoption of the new Management Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Council agrees to adopt the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-2019).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 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) within their areas. The current Management Plan runs to 2014 and therefore it is important that a revised Management Plan is agreed and in place.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 There is risk associated with this report. The revised Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with an established timetable. Agreement to adopt the new plan in accordance with the agreed timetable will ensure that funding conditions imposed by Defra are satisfied. Failure to meet the agreed timetable by not having the up to date and adopted Management Plan in place by the end of March 2014 would result in the Council not meeting its statutory duties and this could risk a loss of funding for the AONB.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 In 1992 the Howardian Hills Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was established to oversee the management of the Howardian Hills AONB. 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, the Forestry Commission and Natural England are members of the JAC. Day to day work is undertaken by the small team of staff in the AONB Unit.
- 5.2 The constituent Local Authorities have agreed that the JAC should co-ordinate the production and implementation of the Management Plan for the Howardian Hills AONB on their behalf. It is a statutory requirement to have an up to date Management Plan in place and to review the Plan every five years. Since the JAC was established, several successive plans have been prepared. The new Management Plan is a review of the current Plan which was adopted in 2009.
- 5.3 Following consultation which was undertaken over the course of 2013, the JAC has now published the new Management Plan 2014-2019 and has requested that it is adopted by the constituent Local Authorities to complete the statutory requirements for its production.
- 5.4 Details of the consultation used to inform the new Management Plan, together with a draft version of the Plan were reported to members of the Planning Committee on the 22 October 2013. At that meeting members of the committee also agreed this Council's response to a draft version of the new Management Plan. The majority of the comments that this Council made as part of the consultation were supportive and/or points of detail. More substantively, it was considered that the Plan should provide explicit support for proposals which support the rural economy. Members also considered that it was important that the Management Plan reflected the current position in relation to potential improvements to the A64 given that these have the potential to be topical within the AONB.

6.0 REPORT

- 6.1 The Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-19) is at Appendix 1 of this report. The JAC has considered all the comments made on the draft Management Plan and has made appropriate amendments. A schedule of all of the comments received following consultation on the draft version of the Plan and a summary of the main issues raised is available to view in the Members Lounge and Members have also been provided with an electronic version of these prior to this meeting. The schedule includes detailed summaries of the comments that this Council submitted during the consultation on the draft Management Plan.
- 6.2 The AONB Management Plan (2014-19) follows a new format and is a substantially slimmer document than its predecessors. It is considered that it is more focussed and succinct and is generally an easier document to read and digest.
- 6.3 The overarching Vision and Key Vision Aims have been slightly reworded to ensure that they remain relevant. The broad principles of the AONB Management Plan remain, although the "Ecosystem Approach" has now been given more prominence than in previous versions to ensure that in accordance with the publication of "Biodiversity 2020", ecosystem targets are integrated into AONB Management Plans by March 2014.

- 6.4 Most of the Objectives are rolled forward from the current (2009-2014) Management Plan, but where possible some have been amalgamated and where necessary, others revised. The majority of revisions relate to updates to actions. This is appropriate given that the plan is a roll forward of an existing document. All of the actions are now located in a specific implementation section of the Plan.
- 6.5 On the whole, the Plan remains very similar to the draft document which was reported to Planning Committee on 22 October 2013.
- 6.6 It should be noted that the comments made by this Council have been addressed in the final document. Specifically, comments made by this Council relating to access to employment opportunities and training and explicit support of proposals to benefit the local economy have been addressed through amendments to Objective D6.1 and the addition of another general principle on page 38. The Objective and Action regarding non-designated heritage assets (HE3, HE3.2) have been substantially re-worded to support the development of site-based management strategies to conserve and enhance important non-designated heritage assets identified by local communities. A glossary has been included, as well as a legend to the AONB Map.
- 6.7 The new Plan also makes a number of references to the A64 and improvements to the A64. In making comments on the draft Management Plan, this Council had asked that it included expressed support for proposals for full movement interchanges at the Broughton Road and Musley Bank junctions. The new plan has included reference to the Broughton Road junction but explicit reference to the Musley Bank junction has not been included.
- 6.8 The AONB Manager has indicated that whilst the JAC could visualise a direct link between the traffic movements in and around the AONB as a result of a full movement junction at Broughton Road, the effect on the AONB of full movement at Musley Bank was less readily understood, particularly in the absence of detailed transport evidence. This raised some uncertainty about whether the project/action would reflect the objective of the Management Plan to which it related.
- 6.9 Mindful of this Council's comments and position, the JAC and AONB Manager have been keen to ensure that Plan does provide the necessary support in principle for improvements to the A64. To this end and in addition to other references to the A64, a further general principle has been added to the Plan to read, "Enhancements to the A64 to improve accessibility both locally and regionally should be supported, subject to minimising impact on the AONB".
- 6.10 It is considered that, whilst less explicit, revisions to the text of the Plan do reflect the comments made by the Council and are realistic for the lifetime of this Management Plan.
- 6.11 On the basis of the above, it is considered appropriate that the District Council adopt the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-2019).

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

There are no new financial implications associated with this report. It should be noted that the AONB Management Plan and in particular the 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.

- b) Legal
The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that a Management Plan for the AONB is in place.
- c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)
No other further implications have been identified.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The AONB will publish the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan (2014-2019) on behalf of the Local Authorities.

Gary Housden
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Background Papers:

Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019
Consultation Responses to the draft Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019
Planning Committee 22 October 2013 Item: 5 Minute ref: 87a
AONB (2013) draft Management Plan 2014-2019
AONB (2009) Management Plan 2009-2014

Background Papers are available for inspection at:

Ryedale House and on the Howardian Hills website at:
http://www.howardianhills.org.uk/11/Management_Plan.html