

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AONB Partnership Committee Meeting

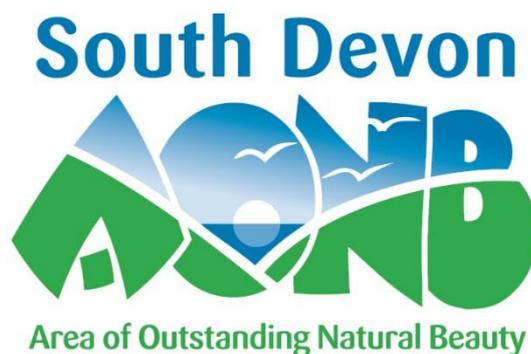
to be held at

10am on Friday 15th March 2019

at

Follaton House, Repton Room

Agenda & Papers



South Devon AONB Staff Unit, Follaton House, Totnes, TQ9 5NE
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AONB Partnership Committee Membership

Members nominated by local authorities

Devon County Council	Cllr Roger Croad Cllr Jonathan Hawkins (officer advising: Peter Chamberlain)
Plymouth City Council South Hams District Council	Sarah Foque Cllr Daniel Brown Cllr John Green (officer advising: Tom Jones)
Torbay Council	Cllr Ray Hill (officer advising: Tracy Brooks)

Members nominated by statutory agencies

Environment Agency	Rob Price
Forestry Commission	Kate Tobin
Historic England	Ross Simmonds
Natural England	Eamon Crowe

Members co-opted by the AONB Partnership Committee

National Trust	Richard Snow
Plymouth University	John Martin (Vice Chairman)
Slapton Ley Field Centre	Andy Pratt (Chairman)

Community Representatives

Amenity groups	Geoffrey Osborn
Business community	Kate Ryder
Community/voluntary groups	Peter Sandover
Environmental organisations (NGOs)	Ed Parr-Ferris
Coast and marine sector	Vacant
Landowning/farming community	Vacant
Parish Councils	Vacant
Tourism community	Samantha Dennis

AONB Unit staff attending

AONB Manager	Roger English
AONB Office Manager	Vanessa Gray
AONB Projects Officer	Adam Davison

Agenda

Item 1 (5 mins)	Introductions & apologies for absence	
Item 2	Declarations of Interests	
Item 3 (5 mins)	Minutes of the last Partnership Committee meeting (7 th December 2018) for approval & any matters arising	Page 4
Item 4 (15 mins) (15 mins) (5 mins)	AONB Partnership matters 4a) Chairman and co-option of Community Representatives 4b) 90-second Partner updates 4c) Annual Forum	Page 12 Page 16 Verbal
Item 5 (15 mins) (10 mins) (15 mins)	Developing projects / initiatives 5a) Plymouth Sound National Marine Park proposal 5b) New Environmental Land Management System 5c) Neighbourhood Planning	Page 17 Page 19 Page 21
Item 6 (15 mins) (10 mins)	AONB Management 6a) AONB Management Plan 6b) AONB Resources 2019/20+	Page 24 Page 32
Item 7 (5 mins) (5 mins)	For information 7a) Planning update 7b) Responses to the consultation on England's Designated Landscapes	See separate reports

Agenda timings are provided as a guide

MINUTES OF THE 14th SEPTEMBER 2018 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING FOR APPROVAL & ANY MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Prior to reviewing the previous minutes, it was noted that the Papers for this meeting were distributed the day before the meeting. The AONB Manager acknowledged the frustration and apologised for the delay. The timescales noted in the Terms of Reference are as follows:
- 2 weeks prior to meeting – draft agenda
 - 1 week prior to meeting – agenda papers
- 3.2 A correction to the minutes was raised, Carole Box, CPRE Torbay had attended the meeting as an observer however Carole's presence had not been noted.
Action 1 (VG) - Note the correction to the minutes and papers and place corrected copies on the website.
- 3.3 Previous actions
- i. Action 1 (RE) – A meeting of the Protected Landscape Review Task and Finish Group is scheduled to follow this meeting.
 - ii. Action 2 (All) – The AONB Manager thanked Members for their advocacy in encouraging and for their own submissions to the call for evidence.
 - iii. Action 3 (TJ) – Tom Jones confirmed at the meeting that the SHDC legal advice regarding land south of Townstal Road can be shared with Members in full.
Action 2 (RE) – circulate full pack to Members with the minutes of this meeting.
 - iv. Action 4 (RE) – shared with the minutes of the last meeting.
 - v. Action 5 (RE) – shared with the minutes of the last meeting.

4A SOUTH DEVON'S WATER ENVIRONMENT

- 4a.1 The AONB Manager introduced this agenda item, going through Item 4A in the papers.
- 4a.2 Rob Price provided a presentation at the meeting.
- i. EA are looking at how to achieve Defra's 25 year environment plan. As part of this process they have defined their Devon and Cornwall Vision, identified 4 key categories or 'noble causes' and the environmental outcomes they aspire to achieve in these categories by 2025/26.
 - ii. The EA are looking at ways of achieving more while reducing costs. This has led to some hard decisions on the level of monitoring of water quality and water quantity. They are strengthening the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA), working with NGOs' and sharing information to help make informed decisions. Publishing of water quality data will now occur tri-annually. An example is the rolling three year statistical analysis of water quality on the Avon which is done to assess the condition of the water body. The environment response to changes can take 5-10 years, so publishing tri-annually should not be impactful. The next data set will be available next September 2019 and will be included on the next available Partnership Committee meeting agenda.
 - iii. RP explained that the the Yealm does not feature in his presentation slides as the EA include this in their Tamar catchment, Cornwall team data.
 - iv. Prior to his presentation, Rob Price outlined the four main areas of water quality matters: Drinking; Food; Water Framework Directive (WFD); Bathing Water Framework. The WFD is law and can be split into three key areas: Biological aspects (i.e. invertebrates); Chemical (i.e. discharge from sewage treatment works, abandoned metal mines etc.); Hydromorphology (i.e. the way the river is shaped and works).
 - v. RP went through a presentation showing changes of water quality in South Devon between 2013-16. The slides showed four available categories for water quality: Bad/Poor/Moderate/Good. For South Devon the majority were Moderate therefore the focus of work will be to move these up to Good. Other areas, such as North Devon, have significantly

more Poor ratings. A copy of the slides will be circulated for Partnership members when they become available.

Action 3 (RP) – send copy of his presentation to the AONB Manager and VG to circulate.

- vi. Bathing water quality is measured by monthly samples taken over six months of the year. The samples are taken in the same location, on the same day of the week and at the same time of day. The EA early warning process involves modelling rain events and based on historic pollution events they can determine whether there is potential for pollution and issue warnings accordingly.
- vii. Sampling methods vary depending on the focus (WFD, Food etc.). The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have different intervals for testing water quality for food; shell fisheries are listed as protected areas in the Water Framework Directive. The EA are working with Bangor University and the FSA with a £350k investment to look at the feasibility of developing a modelling and forecasting tool to be able to predict rain event impacts on shell fisheries. The EA are widening the batch of samples and conducting further tests on flesh from shellfish batches to be able to identify the sources of pollution. The source of e-bacti is identified (ruminant/human) so targeted enforcement can take place and work take place with those organisations.
- viii. EA have set up a project with Natural England and Westcountry Rivers Trust to look at how they can deliver interventions to improve the WFD status on the Gara. This is a pilot to off-set a mapping error that impacts availability of Country Side Stewardship grants.
- ix. The EA are working with the agricultural sector and the water industry on nutrient enrichment challenges in three key ways.
 - Every five years meet with the water industry to target areas for improvement. Periodic Review 2019 is to be signed off by OFWAT in December 2019. In the South West, there will be £1bn invested for improvements. Rob Price informed Members that Signal crayfish have now been recorded in South Devon, work will be required to control this invasive species.
 - Working with NE - to change, reward and enforce action with farming communities. Support and reward are achieved through the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme.
 - Catchment based approach - encouraging engagement and action by all stakeholders such as businesses, people that live and work here as well as visitors, as we all affect water quality.
- x. When looking at water quality issues, the EA, as part of the Defra group, will prioritise designated sites when ranking investments.

4a.3 The Defra 25YEP goals are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan/25-year-environment-plan-our-targets-at-a-glance>

4a.4 RP outlined the noble causes to be focussed on up to by 2026.

In South Devon specifically, in summary the noble causes are:

- Improve around 10 water bodies from moderate to good
- 75 Km improved waterways
- 50 Ha wetland habitat
- ECO friendly harbours

Action 4 (RP) – Circulate the 10 water bodies targeted for improvement from moderate to good as well as the targeted areas for habitat improvement.

4a.5 Other future projects include the Water Environment Grant funded PAN catchment soils project, £750k over three years to develop a world leading approach to managing soils.

Action 5 (All) – Advise the AONB Manager of areas of activity the Partnership feels should be prioritised.

4B REVIEWING THE SOUTH DEVON AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The AONB Manager reported that the Management Plan review was on-track and went through the update, provided by the AONB Project Officer, included in the Papers.

- 4b.1 The AONB Manager highlighted the link contained in the papers which points to an AONB SharePoint site containing the emerging draft Management Plan. The key comments have been collated into a spreadsheet file that is available via the same link.
- 4b.2 The online public consultation period has now closed. Comments received have been broadly supportive and helpful.
- 4b.3 The simplification approach is also being reflected in the presentation of the Management Plan document. LukeTom, the company charged with developing the new South Devon AONB website, are also designing the new Management Plan. The AONB Manager went through some slides showing example page layouts showcasing entries from the recent Heritage Lottery Funded 'What Makes South Devon Special' photo competition.
- 4b.4 The AONB Manager reminded Members that the state of the AONB and forces for change material are in Annexes. The compendium of documents (simplified Management Plan and Annexes) form the Management Plan as a whole.
- 4b.5 Next steps
 - i. Reflect and refine, expected to conclude after Christmas break.
 - ii. The opportunity to influence the final Plan is open until adoption by Local Authorities and sign-off by Natural England. The Local Authority adoption process starts from mid-January.
 - iii. The AONB Manager informed Members that a prospectus launch for Plymouth Marine Park is taking place today. Although the content is not yet known, there is time to feed into the Management Plan and Delivery Plan.

4C PRIORITIES FOR ACTION 2019-20

The AONB Manager went through the update provided in the Papers.

- 4c.1 The Management Plan priority themes are driven by a key objective for each Management Plan theme (fourteen in total). The Delivery Plan puts more detail on these and will be updated annually.
- 4c.2 The Delivery Plan will reflect the difference between actions where the AONB Unit are taking the lead and those where partners are making contributions. The AONB Project Officer will be undertaking conversations with a series of partners to ensure that actions in support of the emerging Management Plan priorities are in the Delivery Plan document.
- 4c.3 The key area of activity to focus on, both to help with the submission of the business plan to Defra in January 2019 and to inform those elements of the Delivery Plan that capture AONB work with partners, is the priorities for action next year. Comments were made in respect of
 - i. The wording of items 4.c.10-11 with some concern that enhancement and net gain have not been referenced. The AONB Manager confirmed that further wordsmithing is to take place and that enhancement and net gain will be specifically referenced.
 - ii. The importance of partnership working and initiatives. The Active Devon presentation on Connecting Actively with Nature (CAN) project, to the March Partnership Committee meeting, highlighted the need to connect partners together to progress the health and wellbeing agenda. TB informed Members that Andrew Gunther, Torbay Council and Public Health, has recently presented to the Royal Town Planning Institute South West on partnership working initiatives.

- iii. As conserving and enhancing landscape character is integral to the primary purpose with respect to natural beauty, PC would like elements of this to be a key priority. The DCC landscape officer has identified areas where they suggest a collective focus from all Devon AONBs would be of benefit.

Action 6 (RE) – To support action in key areas such as tranquillity, particularly working in collaboration with other Devon AONBs.

- iv. Historic environment aspects are not listed. This is a priority for DCC who are working with Historic England to draw down funding in the next financial year to extend the national mapping programme. This is looking at aerial photographs to document the historic environment. This will cover the area between Dartmoor south to the coast. The AONB Manager confirmed that the sense of place element is where historic environment, culture and heritage are covered.
- v. The AONB is a well known brand for tourism in South Devon. Sustainable tourism, farming, food and drink are all on the Local Enterprise Partnership agenda.

ACTION 7 (All) – Let the AONB Manager have their views on the relative weight to be attached to the range of activity and suggestions on potential rephrasing.

- 4c.4 The challenges with funding were discussed. One issue to be highlighted in our response to the Glover Review is the delivery of the Management Plan. Projects and initiatives are a key area of work in delivering Management Plan objectives, this area needs to be resourced and recognised correctly. Having unrestricted funds is essential in unlocking more resources for the priority projects. The gearing on the unrestricted funding exceeds 1:5 and is typically approaching 1:10. Any loss of these funds will have the scaled up comparable loss of activity.
- In Torbay, flood and coastal defences finance meeting produced an eight-page document showing for every £1 paid in the local levy, they have £8 back.

ACTION 8 (RE) –

- The AONB Manager produces a similar document, relating to AONB project funding.
- The AONB Manager incorporate, where possible, the project activities undertaken by the AONB Unit for the farming community, and the correlation of the funding obtained against the project contribution received.
- Reflect available resources against the focus areas and compare to required resources.

4D PLANNING MATTERS

4d.1 The AONB Unit has limited time and resource in the Core budget to support the planning caseload. There has been pro-active work to manage this, such as the implementation of a triage system around a year ago, the planning guidance document, assisting with local plan production etc.

The triage system is based upon balancing risk of AONB harm and significant adverse impact to conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. The four-tier system in use is still resulting in a heavy caseload. The number of consultations has risen steeply over the last year with double the number of consultations received compared with the two years prior, which were in turn double the number received the years before that.

South east and south west AONBs have large planning caseloads. Some have part time planning officers. The South Devon AONB Unit may miss an application or be late in responding on occasion, which is of concern. The AONB Unit does however always provide advice/guidance to officers.

The caseload and the triage system to cope with that needs urgent focus so a meeting has been scheduled with the SHDC Head of Planning, Pat Whymer. A similar meeting with Torbay will also take place.

Once the Management Plan Strategy is largely completed, the AONB Manager will work with planning colleagues to create a planning protocol.

ACTION 9 (RE) - The AONB Manager will cover this in the next Partnership meeting.

4d.2 SHDC have consulted on a pre-app advice model where it is suggested applicants pay separately for AONB advice.

4d.3 The Designated Landscapes Review provides an opportunity to raise the profile of the work and challenges with planning in general. South Devon AONB is eighth in the list in England for consented development, where those top eight absorb around 74% of all development in England's AONBs'. There is an opportunity to highlight the difficulties to the review panel.

4d.4 Future

- i. The AONB is an active member of the Devon Landscape Policy Group. This is a good forum to work collectively and share good practise, ideas and approaches. An aspect of this is Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) training. The next session is March 2019.
- ii. Joint Local Plan (JLP) and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). A series of meetings has taken place to date. The next meeting, to shape the framework, will be held on Friday 14th December. This will go to consultation in March 2019 with a view to adoption straight after the JLP. The JLP, SPD, Planning Guidance and Management Plan taken together, help inform for better quality planning applications.
- iii. There is strong recognition through the consultation process and amongst planning teams that a collaborative piece of work to produce a design guide for our area would be valuable.

4d.5 Members were asked for their views

- Ensure there is no duplication of effort between the AONB Unit and the LAs.
- The change in the triage process, to reduce the caseload, as well as the development of a planning protocol was supported. It was emphasised however that an intended response would be made in time.
- GO would like to be involved in planning protocol discussions, together with colleagues in the Amenity Groups.

- Joint AONB and Landscape Officer responses to planning applications has been found helpful in the past. The AONB Manager has clarified that protected landscape advice requires consideration of wider natural beauty matters that goes beyond landscape advice. In such cases the AONB Unit will need to continue with separate responses.

5A REVIEW OF AONB PARTNERSHIP OPERATION

The AONB Manager outlined four current challenges facing Partnership

5a.1 Andy Pratt is stepping down from his role as Chairman. To allow time to recruit a replacement, Andy will Chair the March meeting. The AONB Manager, supported by Members, thanked the Chairman for everything he has done for the Partnership during his tenure.

The Vice Chairman is unable to take on this role.

- i. Members agreed to allow time for Members not in attendance to contact the AONB Manager to express interest in the role.
- ii. If no interest has been received, Members agreed to the process set out under Part 7 in the Papers.

ACTION 10 (All) – express interest to the AONB Manager by week ending 11th January 2019.

5a.2 The Community Representative roles for Parishes and Farming are still vacant. The AONB Manager is following up on this and will come back to Partnership for suggestions if required.

5a.3 Attendance at the Annual Open Forum is dwindling, and some Members have struggled to attend four Partnership meetings per annum.

ACTION 11 (RE) – Remind Partnership Committee Members that the Terms of Reference allow for a representative to attend if they are unable to do so.

- i. It was agreed to reduce the number of meetings per annum to 3. The current spacing would be maintained, allowing time to prepare for and for Members to attend the autumn Annual Forum.
- ii. The revised meeting schedule for 2019 is as follows:
 - 15th March 2019, Follaton House
 - 14th June 2019, venue tbc
 - 6th December 2019, Follaton House

5B. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

5b.1 Cllr. Jonathan Hawkins

- i. Supports Partnership meetings being held in the AONB.

5b.2 Cllr. John Green

- i. The previous days SHDC full Council meeting discussed the mitigation measures that are in planning approvals and conditions, and how this could be followed up or monitored to ensure these have been put in place.

ACTION 12 (TJ) – Explore with Pat Whymer and Development Management if there is a process whereby S106 money can be used for this monitoring process.

5b.3 Geoffrey Osborn

- i. Informed Members that the Amenity Groups met with the AONB Manager recently to discuss the Glover Review.

5b.4 Tracy Brooks

- i. Three Neighbourhood Plans: Torbay, Paignton and the Brixham Peninsular, have passed the post examination stage.
- ii. Inglewood, land south of White Rock has an extension to 1st March 2019 for its consideration.

5b.5 Eamon Crowe

Not present at the meeting, but provided an update for this agenda item

- i. NE are resource stretched. There is an environmental stewardship extension exercise looking at up to 80 or so agreements across Devon and Cornwall, due for completion by Christmas.
- ii. Will inform Partnership on the 2019 Countryside Stewardship arrangements next year.

6A. REVIEW OF ENGLAND'S DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

6a.1 Lord Cameron of Dillington is due to visit the South Devon AONB on 10th January 2019. His visit will span three hours, with the opportunity for targeted questions. The Task & Finish Group work will form an important part of the conversation.

ACTION 13 (All) – Inform the AONB Manager if interested in this.

6B. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TAKING THE LEAD PROGRAMME

The AONB Manager took Members through the update contained in the Papers, informing on the Heritage Lottery funded 'Future Landscapes' programme led by the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).

Item 4a: Chairman and co-option of Community Representatives

Purpose

1. This report is provided to inform decision making on appointments to the South Devon AONB Partnership Committee following actions agreed at its 7th December 2018 meeting.

Background

2. The South Devon AONB Partnership Constitution incorporating detail on membership, terms of reference, structure and operation was last updated following the 7th December 2018 meeting of the Partnership to reflect the reduction in meeting numbers per year.

Appointment of AONB Partnership Chairman

3. Part 7 of the South Devon AONB Constitution relates to the appointment of the Partnership Committee Chairman.
4. Following Andy Pratt's decision to stand down from the role, the process for appointing a new Chairman was discussed at the 7th December meeting of the Partnership and a decision taken to invite expressions of interest from amongst the current AONB Partnership membership including those unable to attend the last meeting. An email invitation was sent to all members highlighting a closing date of 31 January 2019.
5. Interest was enthusiastically expressed by John Green who remained the only AONB Partnership member to express interest by the closing date. John's Personal Statement is attached for information as Appendix 1 to this item.
6. John, currently a South Hams District Councillor, is not standing again in May 2019 for election to South Hams District Council. If appointed by the Partnership, John will effectively be independent of the Local Authorities after the 8th May 2019, but bring with him the experience of his time as a South Hams District Council elected member in addition to his other very relevant experience. John's appointment would therefore meet the Partnership's established preference for continuing with an independent Chairman.
7. Along with the AONB Staff Unit, Andy Pratt has kindly agreed to support a handover period ensuring that the Partnership is ready to operate with a new Chairman for its June 2019 meeting.
8. A decision by the Partnership is required on the appointment of John Green as South Devon AONB Partnership Committee Chairman for a term of two years.

AONB Parish Councils Community Representative

9. Following the 7th December 2018 Partnership meeting and a proposal from Cllr Jonathan Hawkins, the AONB Manager has had a number of conversations and email exchanges with Lynne Maurer, Chair of Kingswear Parish Council. Lynne has kindly stepped forward to represent the South Devon AONB Parish Councils. A brief personal statement for Lynne is attached for information as Appendix 2 to this item.
10. A decision by the Partnership is required on the co-option of Lynne Maurer as South Devon AONB Partnership Community Representative for Parish Councils for the remainder of the three year term up to the next Community election of Representatives.

AONB Farming and Land Owning Community Representative

11. Given the importance of farming and land management to the future conservation and enhancement of the AONB through what is likely to be a turbulent period, this role remains an important one to fill with the right person. Suitable candidates with sufficient time available to commit to the Partnership are proving difficult to find.
12. However, positive conversations have been had with Geoff Sayers of Carswell Farms Ltd whose wealth of organic farming knowledge, farm diversification experience, entrepreneurial nature and interest in environmental matters combine to provide a valuable potential Farming and Land Owning community representative. Due to business, farming and family pressures Geoff is yet to make a firm decision.
13. An in principle decision by the Partnership is required on the co-option of Geoff Sayers as South Devon AONB Partnership Community Representative for the Farming and Land Owning Community for the remainder of the three year term up to the next election of Community Representatives.

AONB Coast and Marine Community Representative

14. Following a change in personal circumstances Jamie Davies recently resigned from his role as AONB Coast and Marine sector community representative. A contract in Fiji will see Jamie and his family moving to the other side of the world for at least three years.
15. Jamie's support has been greatly appreciated over the last few months including acquiring drone footage and understanding the potential of remote sensed data for the Sharpham marshes and surrounding intertidal areas of the Dart estuary.
16. The support of AONB Partnership members is requested in searching for a replacement Community Representative of the Coast and Marine Sector for the remainder of the three year term up to the next election of Community Representatives.

Recommendations

17. AONB Partnership Committee members are recommended to:
 - i. Consider and vote on the appointment of John Green to the role of AONB Partnership Committee Chairman.
 - ii. Consider and vote on the co-option of Lynne Maurer to the role of Community Representative for AONB Partnership Councils.
 - iii. Discuss the principle of co-option for Geoff Sayers should he be in a position to commit to the role in the near future.
 - iv. Suggest nominations for an AONB Coast and Marine sector Community Representative to replace Jamie Davies.

Appendix 1 to Item 4a



John Green

I have over 25 years of experience in the environmental sector, including campaigning and having been the Chief Operations Officer and Director of several companies.

I am presently a District Councillor on South Hams District Council and represent the Council on the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership Committee, as well as being a member of the AONBs Core Funding Group. I am an effective communicator and have been the Chair of numerous groups. My particular strengths lie in being independent minded, having attention to detail where needed and also helping to create coherent strategy. I enjoy the role of scrutiny which enables me to be a critical friend, finding ways to improve the functioning of an organisation.

I am also a Parish Councillor in Newton and Noss, representing the Parish on the Yealm Estuary Management Group. As a Parish Councillor I became heavily involved in developing a Neighbourhood Plan, taking on responsibility for assessing and designating Local Green Spaces which restrict development from areas which are important to the local community.

In 2018 I coordinated the delivery of the Life on the Yealm initiative (<https://lifeontheyealm.org/>), in conjunction with the Marine Biological Association of the UK and Newton and Noss Environment Group. The project focused on inspiring local people to value natural habitats and species in the ancient woodland, areas of conservation and the Yealm estuary. The role involved providing events for school children and the local community.

If selected, I will bring my passion and enthusiasm to the role of Chair to help strengthen the role of the AONB unit. Most importantly, I will help ensure that the voices of people and groups who value the AONB are heard, so that together we can conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty.

Appendix 2 to Item 4a

Personal Statement from Lynne Maurer in support of co-option to Community Representative for AONB Parish Councils.

“I have been a teacher for 47 years. The environment of my students and enjoying and conserving it has always played an important part in what I do.

I have been a Councillor for Kingswear Parish Council, for three years and I am now Chair. In this new role I found that by networking with others I have been able to gain insight into the issues that are involved in keeping our environment, flora and fauna, safe.

I am a Londoner...I have lived here for 20 years and I still think I am on holiday! I am passionate and enthusiastic about conservation and I believe that I am a good communicator and a good listener.

This opportunity with the AONB is very exciting and I look forward to learning so much more about our area and how I can facilitate positive outcomes.”

Lynne Maurer, Chair of Kingswear Parish Council

Item 4b: 90-second Partner updates

Purpose

1. To provide each AONB Partnership member with an opportunity to highlight recent or upcoming activity relevant to the conservation and enhancement of the South Devon AONB.

Background

2. In recognition that much of the work of the AONB Partnership and its wider partners occurs outside of scheduled AONB Partnership meetings, this item is intended to replace and refocus the former 'Round Table Partnership Update' agenda item to give sufficient time for Partnership members to update colleagues on organisational, personal or community activity undertaken in support of
 - a. AONB Management Plan Priorities; or the
 - b. Conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the South Devon AONB
3. Each AONB Partnership Member is invited to use no more than 90 seconds to describe key actions they or their organisation/community of interest has been involved in whilst advocating for the South Devon AONB and/or the main issues and opportunities relevant to AONB Management from their organisation or community of interest perspective.
4. Partnership members are reminded that the Chairman and AONB Manager encourage any substantive matters that warrant treatment as larger agenda items to be highlighted to the AONB Manager at the earliest possible opportunity in order to benefit from partner input and assist in shaping relevant, meaningful and engaging Partnership agendas.

Recommendations

5. Partnership Committee members are recommended to:
 - i. Provide 90 second updates.
 - ii. Highlight substantive items to be addressed through future agendas.

Item 5a: Plymouth Sound National Marine Park proposal

Purpose

1. To provide an update to AONB Partnership members on the development of a proposal by Plymouth City Council supported by Luke Pollard MP and the Blue Marine Foundation to create the UK's first National Marine Park.

Background

2. Over the past year there have been a series of discussions focused on creating the UK's first National Marine Park (NMP) in Plymouth Sound and nearby coastal spaces. Plymouth City Council, working with the Blue Marine Foundation, are keen to develop the conversation further, including:
 - What the NMP could deliver
 - What the NMP should be called
 - How big the NMP should be and the area(s) it should cover
 - When the NMP should be designated.
3. An engagement process was started in January 2019 including the publication of a prospectus outlining the case for a National Marine Park and an open online consultation. A copy of the prospectus document can be accessed via <http://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s93548/NMP%20Prospectus.pdf>
4. The online consultation generated 163 responses supported by a number of workshops, meetings and library engagement events. A specific workshop was held for members of Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum and Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee to explore their aspirations and to identify the type of legacy members would like to help create for Plymouth Sound into the future.

Relationship with existing designations including the South Devon AONB and Heritage Coast

5. The proposed Stage 1 initial area and Stage 2 extension area wash over a substantial number of existing statutory and non-statutory designations and cover areas managed by a wide range of partnerships and organisations of various types with different responsibilities. The South Devon AONB and South Devon Heritage Coast are examples of such designations together with the South Devon AONB Partnership, South Devon Estuaries Partnership and its local estuary management groups and fora.
6. The proposal comes at a time when the Glover review independent panel is considering the future of designated landscapes (including seascapes) across England. Topical issues raised for the review to consider include the degree to which coastal designated landscapes should incorporate inshore waters that contribute to their special qualities and to what degree their management bodies should be supporting a wider range of legal purposes including promoting opportunities for recreation activities compatible with their purpose of designation. Any National Marine Park proposal would need to carefully consider avoiding duplication of landscape and seascape designations, fully recognise the roles of existing management bodies and bring clear and sustainable added benefits.

7. Further information will be provided at the AONB Partnership Committee in support of this item to inform discussion, including a short presentation from Paul Naylor entitled “Meet the neighbours – South Devon’s colourful marine life”.

Next Steps

8. The consultation and workshop sessions have raised some points and further consideration will be required. Whilst the general feedback has been very positive, some important points have been raised that require resolution, which is not unexpected given the complexity of the project.
 - Further conversations will therefore need to take place over the coming months and Plymouth City Council will not be moving further with the National Marine Park proposal until the issues people have raised have been resolved.
 - Consultants will be assisting with this during the period April – August.
 - In the meantime, work will continue on engaging with businesses, community groups and organisations in order to continue develop the thinking on how a National Marine Park could work for Plymouth.

Recommendations

9. The Partnership Committee is recommended to:
 - i. Review the report, NMP prospectus and verbal presentation and offer their views on the proposal including its:
 - a. potential benefits and dis-benefits
 - b. proposed area(s)
 - c. integration or otherwise with the South Devon AONB and Heritage Coast designations and management.

Item 5b: New Environmental Land Management System

Purpose

1. To introduce AONB Partnership members to the emerging Environmental Land Management System, a key policy to deliver commitments under the 25 Year Environment Plan and begin to explore the implications and opportunities for conserving and enhancing the South Devon AONB.

Background

2. The government has made it very clear that its direction of travel for a new British Agricultural Policy is about moving to a system of paying “public money for public goods”. The 2018 ‘Health and Harmony’ consultation paper spelled out the desire to phase out direct payments to farmers and shift funding into new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and Defra recently shared its emerging thinking on the design of a ELMS. This is at early stages and there are many stages to go through before there are any solid proposals for a future scheme.
3. Defra recognises the need for a simple scheme for applicants and currently favour a whole farm plan based approach, covering both production and environment. The detail of what is included in a plan, who is the delivery body, or who does on-farm monitoring are all to be determined, along with many other aspects of the scheme. Many of these will be tested and trialed before they are brought together in the new ELMS, which is due to be in place around 2025, following a series of ELMS pilots from 2021 onwards.
4. The government will look at new payment mechanisms in order to achieve environmental outcomes and improve value for money. Instead of offering set payments for set options, it will consider payment by results or holding reverse auctions. The latter would involve landowners submitting individual bids in order to allow them to adopt a new land management practice that bring environmental benefits. DEFRA will also look at the use of conservation covenants which would enable a landowner to dedicate land to long-term conservation purposes in return for payment.

AONBS and ELMS

5. Members of The National Association for AONBs have been working collaboratively to develop an offer to Defra in the form of an ELMS trial project. The project aims to trial elements of the proposed ELMS in the context of England’s protected landscapes and is pivotal in several ways:
 - it positions AONBs as key delivery agents of new agri-environment schemes
 - it helps to establish the principle of using AONB Management Plans as the framework for agri-environment scheme delivery in designated landscapes
 - it helps AONBs raise the status of landscape in the allocation of public money for public goods & services, in its broadest sense as an umbrella term that delivers many ecosystem services
 - it raises AONBs status, strengthens its position as key players in influencing rural policy and working with & supporting landowners, farmers and foresters.

This will also achieve benefits for and links to:

- evidence base for the AONB Management Plan and other plans and strategies including Landscape Character Assessment
- the 25 YEP (Nature Recovery Networks)
- mapping natural capital and measuring delivery of ecosystem services

- ecological networks and historic environment mapping.

NAAONB Strategic Objectives for ELMs:

- a) AONB Management Plans as Strategic Spatial Frameworks - to test and trial the role of AONB Management Plans as strategic spatial frameworks for ELMs in the designated landscapes and their setting that will map natural capital, landscape character, cultural capital, social capital and ecosystem services to inform and target the delivery of public good outcomes.
 - b) Land Management Plan (farm scale): focusing on collaborations of farm holdings within a Landscape -scale Delivery Plan area, develop and test integrated land management plans at the landholding scale, determining whether spatial policy objectives (via SO1) can be translated/interpreted to a practical management level.
 - c) Indicators of Success- To develop a series of indicators of success for schemes that have been developed with farmers and that are, where appropriate, capable of self assessment.
 - d) Monitoring, verification and payment trigger- To develop and test a monitoring and verification payment system, and determine who is best placed to do the monitoring
 - e) Testing guidance- To test the scope and ability for the new system to deliver broad multiple environmental, social and economic objectives
 - f) Evaluating collaboration- To test the efficacy of collaborative working across and between protected landscapes.
6. The AONB Manager will provide further information at the Partnership meeting on South Devon AONB engagement in ELMS tests and trials together with known activity in the area being undertaken by other partners.

Recommendations

7. The Partnership Committee is recommended to:
- i. Note the report and offer its views on the emerging Environmental Land Management System; and
 - ii. Consider any geographic and thematic areas of farming, forestry and land management activity felt to be most relevant and beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and special qualities of the South Devon AONB.

Item 5c: Neighbourhood Planning

Purpose

1. This report updates members of the AONB Partnership Committee on progress by communities across the South Devon AONB to develop and adopt Neighbourhood Plans.
2. Peter Sandover, Community representative for AONB Voluntary Groups and a *Locality Neighbourhood Planning Champion* will provide further information during the meeting.

Background

3. The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was introduced through the Localism Act 2011.
4. National Planning Practice Guidance describes Neighbourhood Planning as:

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

Neighbourhood planning is not a legal requirement but a right which communities in England can choose to use. Communities may decide that they could achieve the outcomes they want to see through other planning routes, such as incorporating their proposals for the neighbourhood into the Local Plan, or through other planning mechanisms such as Local Development Orders and supplementary planning documents or through pre-application consultation on development proposals. Communities and local planning authorities should discuss the different choices communities have to achieving their ambitions for their neighbourhood.

In a designated neighbourhood area which contains all or part of the administrative area of a town or parish council, the town or parish council is responsible for neighbourhood planning. Where there is no town or parish council such as those parts of the AONB falling within the Unitary Authorities of Torbay and Plymouth designated neighbourhood forums are normally formed.”

The Neighbourhood Planning Process

5. The procedural steps that communities must follow were subsequently set out in Neighbourhood Planning regulations 2012, revised in 2015. In summary they are:
 - i. Set up a Neighbourhood Planning Group and designate a plan area
 - ii. Collect evidence and consult the community
 - iii. Write a plan for the designated plan area
 - iv. Examination and Referendum

Current Position

6. Over the last seven years, AONB communities have responded to the opportunity to develop Neighbourhood Plans to varying degrees from enthusiastic early adopters to opting not to develop a plan. The following table summarises the current position for Neighbourhood Plan development throughout AONB Parishes and neighbourhoods.

Approved at Referendum = 5	In Development = 6	Designated & in early stages = 11	No active Neighbourhood Planning = 20
Thurlestone Newton and Noss Malborough Ugborough Stoke Fleming	Bigbury (Reg 14) Strete (Reg 16) Brixton (Reg 16) South Milton (Reg 16) Salcombe (Reg 17) Brixham Peninsula *	Kingswear South Huish Aveton Gifford Wembury Modbury Berry Pomeroy Stoke Gabriel Kingston Kingsbridge, West Alvington and Churchstow	Holbeton ** Dartmouth ** Yealmpton Ringmore East Portlemouth Stokenham Slapton Charleton Forgmore & Sherford Loddiswell Woodleigh North Huish Diptford Dittisham Cornworthy Ashprington Blackawton Buckland-Tout-Saints Chivelstone South Pool

* The Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan has been examined and is scheduled for referendum vote on Thursday 2nd May along with Neighbourhood Plans for Paignton and Torquay.

** Following some early stages work, the Holbeton and Dartmouth Neighbourhood Planning Groups have been discontinued

7. Of the 42 Town or Parish Council areas wholly or partly within the South Devon AONB, 22 are progressing or have adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The remaining 20 Parishes, all within South Hams are not currently engaged in Neighbourhood Planning. The status of Neighbourhood Plans for the Plymouth neighbourhoods of Turnchapel, Hooe, Oreston and Mount Batten; and Goosewell are unknown. When combined, the communities and neighbourhoods listed above cover the land component of the AONB and a substantial part of its immediate landward setting.
8. Where Neighbourhood Plans have been developed, AONB advice, Management Plan material and Planning Guidance content has largely been woven into and well reflected within the choice of policy wording and general approach taken. Plans are consequently robust and generally well linked to AONB Management Plan priorities, typically addressing a range of issues in addition to development and housing allocations.
9. Where communities and neighbourhoods are not actively involved in developing a plan, greater reliance is placed on the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Plan policies and other documents including the AONB Management Plan and Planning Guidance to guide decision-taking. One assessment of this position is that a two tier system of Neighbourhood Planning is emerging across AONB communities which presents risks, challenges and opportunities.

Recommendations

10. The Partnership Committee is recommended to:
 - i. Consider how the AONB Partnership and Staff Unit can best support those communities undertaking Neighbourhood Planning throughout the AONB.
 - ii. Consider the implications for communities and AONB conservation and enhancement in those parts of the South Devon AONB where Neighbourhood Planning activity is not currently taking place.

Item 6a: AONB Management Plan

Purpose of the report

1. This report updates members on progress and the remaining stages of work to publish the statutory South Devon AONB Management Plan strategy and annual delivery plan for the period 2019/2020.

Background

2. The framework, process and timetable for reviewing the AONB Management Plan have been the subject of several reports to the Partnership Committee over the last eighteen months.
3. The revised AONB Management Plan for the period 2019-2024 remains on schedule for formal adoption and publication by the end of March 2019 by the four local authorities of Devon County Council, South Hams District Council, Torbay Council and Plymouth City Council. Submission to the Secretary of State of the Environment then follows as the final formal stage.

Arrangements for adoption

4. Following the last meeting of the Partnership Committee, receipt of final consultation responses, and findings of the Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment, minor text changes were made prior to initiating adoption by the four AONB local authorities.
5. Natural England have formally assessed the plan and confirmed on 27th February 2019 that it considers the Plan meets the statutory requirement under s90 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
6. Devon County Council adopted the plan on 13th February 2019 via Cabinet Member delegated decision.
7. South Hams District Council adopted the plan on 21st February 2019 by the unanimous vote of Full Council.
8. The adoption process is underway in both Plymouth City and Torbay Councils, though formal adoption has not yet been confirmed.
9. The document has been readied for publication with maps, photos and graphics and awaits the decision of the final two local authorities before finalising. Whilst the document will be made widely available in pdf form via the South Devon AONB website, a small print run will provide a limited supply of printed copies. A launch event has been programmed and though final arrangements are still being worked on, further details will be provided by the AONB Projects Officer during the Partnership meeting.

Delivery Plan

10. The delivery plan for 2019-2020 provides an important second part to the Management Plan following on directly from the strategy. It sets out action to be delivered by a wide range of organisations and partners in support of the Management Plan's strategic priorities. The delivery plan will continue to be updated annually to ensure it remains relevant and flexible.

11. The Draft South Devon AONB Delivery Plan 2019/2020 can be found as Appendix 1 to this item.

Recommendations

12. The AONB Partnership Committee is recommended to:
 - i. Note the arrangements for the adoption of the AONB Management Plan.
 - ii. Consider and comment on the delivery plan actions summarised in the Appendix 1 to this item.

Appendix 1 to Item 6a

Draft South Devon AONB Delivery Plan 2019/2020

The activities listed under the Management Plan strategy themes delivered in 2019/2020 contribute towards the conservation and enhancement of the South Devon AONB. **Those initiatives led by the South Devon AONB staff unit on behalf of the partnership are highlighted in light blue.** The table identifies role of the Staff Unit (Partner in Green and Advocate in Black) and the project lead is identified in **bold**. Further information on any of the projects or initiatives contained in this delivery plan can be obtained from the South Devon AONB staff unit.

PLACE			
Landscape Character			
1	Develop and submit proposals for undergrounding overhead power lines to the approved voluntary initiative Western Power Distribution (WPD) regulatory period 2015-2023 (known as RIIO-ED1)	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB</i>
2	Work towards Dark Sky Discovery Site status for sites within the AONB.	Partner	<i>South Devon AONB/ local groups</i>
Natural Resources & Climate			
3	Complete and publish the South Devon River Catchments Strategic Plan (CaBA)	Lead	<i>Co-hosted with WCRT</i>
4	Delivery of funded prioritised CaBA projects	Partner	<i>Various partners</i>
5	Catchment Sensitive Farming scheme in the South Devon AONB including Nitrate Vulnerable Zone initiatives	Partner	<i>Natural England / Environment Agency/ West Country Rivers Trust</i>
6	AONB Unit to facilitate and lead a number of beach cleans	Partner	<i>South Devon AONB/ Marine Conservation Society and local groups</i>
7	Implement a programme of infrastructure improvements under SWWs 6 th asset management period (AMP6)	Advocate	<i>South West Water</i>
8	Develop a programme of infrastructure improvements under SWWs 7 th asset management period (AMP7 programme to begin in 2020)	Advocate	<i>South West Water</i>
9	Implement water quality projects informed by condition assessments under the Bathing Water Directive	Advocate	<i>Environment Agency</i>
10	Deliver actions as part of the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan for the Slapton catchment	Advocate	<i>Natural England</i>
Biodiversity & Geodiversity			
11	Provide landowner advice, habitat enhancements and connectivity improvements through the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB</i>
12	Use Open Farm Sunday, Big Day out on the farm, local community events and AONB events to highlight the contribution farming and land management make to AONB biodiversity and the natural capital/ecosystems services these provide.	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB /landowners</i>
13	Deliver a NERC funded Collaborative Award in Science and Engineering PhD studentship using the South Devon AONB as an outdoor laboratory to better understand how pollinators act in fragmented landscapes	Lead	<i>Exeter University / South Devon AONB</i>
14	Deliver projects that are identified in the portfolio of projects identified in the Wembury Corridors and Connections programme	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB / landowners</i>

15	Work towards match funding Wild Wembury projects prior to delivery	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB / landowners</i>
16	Deliver the South Devon element of the Pacific Oyster Citizen Science Project to 'heat-map' the population density of this potentially invasive species around SDAONB estuary shores.	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB /landowners/partners</i>
17	Devon Special Species project development based on SDAONB coastal sites. The project will involve population analysis, prioritising action, building partnerships and seeking resources to support delivery of targeted conservation / habitat management projects	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB/Local Nature Partnership /landowners</i>
18	Implement action in support of the management plans for Berry Head and Slapton Ley National Nature Reserves	Partner	<i>Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust/ Slapton Ley Field Studies Council</i>
19	Support the implementation of the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project	Partner	<i>Devon Wildlife Trust</i>
20	Support the implementation of the Back from the Brink Project for Grey long eared bats through the project partnership	Partner	<i>Devon Wildlife Trust</i>
21	Work with partners to monitor and manage non-native invasive species (NNIS) in the AONB	Partner	<i>Devon Wildlife Trust /Devon Invasive Species Initiative/NE/EA</i>
22	South Devon Wildlife Champions project 2018 - 2021	Partner	<i>Devon Wildlife Trust</i>
23	Provide landowner advice, habitat enhancements and grassland condition improvements through the Avon Valley Project	Partner	<i>Devon Wildlife Trust / South Devon Nature Trust/ South Devon AONB</i>
24	Land Outdoors Nature programme focussing on reversing the decline in wildlife at Bolt Head/Bolt Tail	Advocate	<i>National Trust</i>
25	Priority landscapes programme. Focused on Cirl Bunting conservation initiatives	Advocate	<i>RSPB</i>
26	Work towards meeting conservation objectives for South Devon's SSSIs and SACs	Advocate	<i>Natural England</i>
27	Coastal grassland management for nature conservation using a remote flail to target inaccessible sites	Advocate	<i>National Trust</i>
Historic Environment			
28	Develop and deliver coastal and estuarine historic environment community research and recording through Year 1 of the 3 year National Lottery Heritage Fund supported CITIZAN (Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network) – South Devon Rivers Discovery Programme	Partner	<i>CITIZAN/ Devon County Council</i>
29	Phase 2 of the Moor to Shore National Mapping (Aerial Photo) Project (Plymouth/Dartmoor/ Salcombe and coastal strip)	Advocate	<i>Historic England/ Devon County Council</i>
30	Add findings of the Phase 2 National Mapping Project to the Historic Environment Record	Advocate	<i>Historic England/ Devon County Council</i>
Farming & Land Management			
31	Deliver Countryside Stewardship Facilitation support to farmers and landholders in the Avon Valley Facilitation Group	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB/Landowners</i>
32	Provide coordination and promote knowledge exchange amongst land management advisers active in South Devon through the South Devon Conservation Advisers' Forum	Lead	<i>South Devon AONB/Landowners</i>
33	Support the community group management of The Grove, Churston	Partner	<i>Friends of Grove Woods</i>
34	Review of Management Plans for Woodland trust sites throughout South Devon	Advocate	<i>Woodland Trust</i>
35	Deliver a Woods into Management programme – to include the wooded western parts of the South Devon AONB	Advocate	<i>Forestry Commission</i>

36	Conservation management initiatives on <i>National Trust</i> tenant farmed land	Advocate	National Trust
37	Provide a strategic lead on action to combat tree disease throughout the area including <i>Phytophthora</i> and <i>Chalara</i>	Advocate	Forestry Commission
Coast & Marine Environment			
38	Dartmouth steel-piled sea walls habitat project. Local trials to identify mitigation opportunities	Lead	South Devon AONB /Plymouth University
39	Work with partners to deliver a series of events and activities to actively promote the South Devon coast	Partner	Devon Wildlife Trust / South Devon AONB
40	Develop a large scale marine engagement project involving South Devon coastline and inshore waters	Partner	Devon Wildlife Trust/ South Devon AONB
41	Support the sustainable development of a 'National Marine Park'	Partner	Plymouth City Council
42	Proposed Marine Conservation Zone advocacy work (project areas defined June 2019)	Advocate	Natural England
43	Develop and implement a long-term plan for South Milton Sands	Advocate	National Trust
Rivers & Estuaries			
44	Develop and implement a South Devon Catchment Partnership Year 3 work programme and seek funding for further work	Lead	CaBA partnership
45	Update and maintain 10 slipway information panels	Lead	South Devon AONB
46	Support seagrass conservation and trial advanced mooring solutions in the SDAONB.	Partner	South Devon AONB /NE/EA/Harbour authorities
47	Complete the Kingsbridge and Salcombe Diffuse Water Pollution plan	Partner	Natural England/Environment Agency
48	River Gara Diffuse Water Pollution Interventions	Partner	Natural England/Environment Agency
PEOPLE			
Access, Recreation & Tourism			
49	Deliver a programme of Naturally Healthy events and activities for target groups	Lead	South Devon AONB / LNP
50	Brixham / Kingswear Peninsula Routeways and Connections projects - deliver and support identified projects from action plan (short term)	Lead	South Devon AONB /Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust/National Trust/LA partners
51	Fund, produce and deliver interpretation boards around the coast path as part of Explore South Devon project	Lead	South Devon AONB / South West Coast Path Association
52	Develop and produce a walking guide app for the Explore South Devon project.	Lead	South Devon AONB / South West Coast Path Association
53	Produce and install 12 interpretation panels at visitor hubs across the AONB (car parks, access points, Holiday parks / camp sites)	Lead	South Devon AONB / South West Coast Path Association
54	Resurfacing car parks and key footpath routes on National Trust land (<i>South West Coast Path growth fund</i>)	Advocate	National Trust/
Planning & Sustainable Development			
55	Revise and promote the use of the South Devon AONB planning guidance document (MP4, Annex 1)	Lead	South Devon AONB
56	Revise and agree a planning protocol with LPAs	Lead	South Devon AONB
57	Produce a Construction Environmental Management Plan guidance document aimed at construction activities on or near the foreshore	Lead	South Devon AONB

58	Engage in the development of the Joint Local Plan for South Hams/West Devon	Partner	South Hams DC/ West Devon DC
59	Support and contribute towards the development of the South West Marine Plan	Partner	Marine Management Organisation
60	Develop a built and natural environment design guide for the SDAONB with the private sector	Partner	South Hams DC / South Devon AONB
Transport and Highways			
61	Install gateway signs following consultation and agreement with parish councils and highway authorities	Lead	South Devon AONB
62	Review, update and install ferry and river panels (Yealm, Erme and Avon)	Lead	South Devon AONB
63	Develop and implement Wembury Verges Project to improve their nature conservation value	Lead	South Devon AONB
Rural Economy and Services			
64	Develop new prioritised programmes of local economic action and seek resources to support implementation	Advocate	South Devon Coastal Local Action Group
65	Support initiatives in support of the Heart of the Southwest Local Enterprise Partnership strategic economic plan	Advocate	HoTSW Board
66	Shellfish Assurance Scheme DASSHH	Advocate	Seafish
Community & Culture			
67	Seek funding to deliver a community project alongside the Wembury corridors and connections habitat enhancements project	Lead	South Devon AONB
68	Develop volunteering opportunities including photographers, Adopt a walk, event stewarding, estuary project eyes and ears reporting	Lead	South Devon AONB
69	Delivery of public events to promote awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the South Devon AONB and specific projects as part of 2019 Year of Green Action	Lead	South Devon AONB
70	Deliver Connecting Actively to Nature projects targeted to the over 55s based on WI involvement and grandparents and grandchildren.	Lead	South Devon AONB/Active Devon
71	Investigate links for ways into volunteering with NT in South Devon	Partner	National Trust/South Devon AONB
72	New provision and upgrades to existing sport, play and recreation facilities through s106 developer contributions	Advocate	South Hams LPA, Torbay LPA
PARTNERSHIP			
Awareness, communication and organisation			
73	Improve opportunities for collaborative working and joint initiatives	Partner	National Association of AONBs
74	Explore opportunities for the AONB family to jointly commission projects and provide consultancy services to generate income	Partner	National Association of AONBs
The core business of the AONB Unit on behalf of the Partnership also includes the following actions:			
Service and coordinate the AONB Partnership Committee			
Service and coordinate the AONB Core Funding Group			
Service and coordinate the South Devon Estuaries Partnership			
Ensure the AONB Management Plan Review works collaboratively with Parishes, Neighbourhood Plan Groups and local businesses.			

Develop and publish an AONB Annual Report
Organise and run the AONB Open Annual Forum
Maintain and develop the South Devon AONB website, social media, e-bulletins, press releases etc. Support and promote #Outstanding Week in SDAONB
Ensure that the AONB has a profile at relevant shows and events
Respond to consultation requests from LPAs on planning applications for significant developments
Contribute toward the development of LPAs Strategic Planning Policy
Undertake an update of images as part of Fixed Post Photography landscape monitoring programme
Provide advice to Local Authorities and other organisations on AONB duties and special qualities
Deliver a programme of community engagement activities
Provide land management advice and coordination
Produce a 3-year South Devon AONB Partnership and Staff Unit Business Plan and submit to DEFRA
Revise the operation of the South Devon AONB Partnership, any working groups and support the AONB Community Representatives in liaising with their sectors
Publish an annual update to the AONB Delivery Plan
Seek initial trustees and formally launch a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in support of the South Devon AONB
AONB governance - 3xAONB Partnership meetings, 2xAONB Estuaries Steering Group, 1x annual open forum
Undertake a formal review of the 2019-2024 AONB Management Plan in 2023
Develop intern post to support team and specific project delivery
Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally.
Specific volunteering opportunities for MOP - e.g. walks checkers; events assistants, tied to specific projects, photographers
The AONB Unit will lead or contribute to the following partnerships during 2019/2020
AONB Estuaries Partnership Steering Group
Avon Estuary Forum
Brixham and Kingswear Peninsula Project Group
Dart Estuary Forum
Devon AONBs Officers group
Devon Maritime Forum
Devon Landscape Policy Group
Devon Local Nature Partnership
Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat project steering group
Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat community engagement T and F group
Support and participate in the work of the Devon Hedge Group
Support and participate in the Local Environmental Resilience Group as part of the Ash Die Back group (LERG)
South Devon AONB Partnership Committee
South Devon Catchments Partnership
Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum
Slapton Line Partnership Steering Group
South Devon Outdoors tourism sector group
Slapton Nature Reserve Land Management Committee

South Devon Local Action Group Management Board
South Devon AONB Farmers' Sounding Board Group
Sustainability and Outdoor learning in Devon – LNP project group
Tamar Estuary Consultative Forum
Wembury Marine Centre Partnership
Wembury Voluntary Marine Conservation Area group
Yealm Estuary Management Group

Item 6b: AONB Resources 2019/20+

Purpose

1. This report takes a brief look ahead from April 2019 and highlights related funding and programming matters.

Background

2. The 2019/20 financial year is the last year of the government's four year funding commitment to the English AONB family originally made in 2016. The South Devon AONB annual grant bid to Defra for this final year of government contribution, totalling £159,559 toward core and project costs, was submitted on the 11th February 2019.
3. Devon County Council have been able to marginally increase their core funding contribution to £18,500 for 2019/20 and South Hams District Council are maintaining a stasis budget of £20,749 toward a Core budget of £170,521.
4. Along with these important sums, contributions from Torbay and Plymouth Councils plus earned income are required to balance the budget for AONB Unit core work over the course of 2019/20 providing sufficient funds of 25% to draw down the Defra grant of 75%.
5. The project funding picture remains significantly more complex. The cessation of project contributions from South Hams District Council increases the challenges ahead to match Management Plan priorities with funding sources whilst retaining a viable staff team to support project delivery. The loss of £9,700 without a phased reduction or significant advanced warning to plan effectively will prove particularly challenging, reducing available match funding and at the same time increasing our need for income to support staff costs.
6. The Core Funding Group has agreed a balanced project budget for 2019/20 by increasing the reliance on earned income to support staff costs in addition to requiring external sources of income to fund project activity beyond internal staff costs. A projects budget of £210,101 has been set for 2019/20.
7. Maintaining and continually developing a project pipeline whilst exploring alternative sources of funding remains the strategy for the medium term, remaining open and flexible to new opportunities.

2020/21 onwards

8. At this stage the funding picture for 2020/21 and onwards is not at all clear. However a number of signs do provide reasons for cautious optimism. Defra feedback to the National Association for AONBs continues to be positive and the NAAONB Chief Executive is working hard on behalf of the English AONBs to secure the best deal possible with Defra for what is likely to be an interim period before the Glover review findings are published and acted on. The detail of any Defra offer is likely to follow the government's next comprehensive spending review and the uncertainty around the UK leaving the EU will make this task more difficult.
9. This lack of clarity has the potential to be disruptive during 2019/20 and will need careful management and the support of all partners to ensure in particular that our local authority partners hold their nerve during an unsettling period. A degree of trust in track record, flexibility of approach,

reliance on project funding sources and alternative forms of income, as per the South Devon AONBs Income Generation Strategy and Business Plan, will be central to maintaining both stability and momentum during this critical period.

Recommendations

10. The Partnership Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the report and the challenges ahead.
- ii. Take every opportunity to work with the AONB Manager and wider Staff Team to explore new funding opportunities, particularly where these clearly align with Management Plan priorities.