



SCOPING REPORT for the Mendip Hills Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan Strategic
Environmental Assessment – Consultation December 3rd
2012– January 11th 2013



Mendip Hills AONB
Scoping Report for the
Strategic Environmental Assessment of the
Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Management Plan

December 2012

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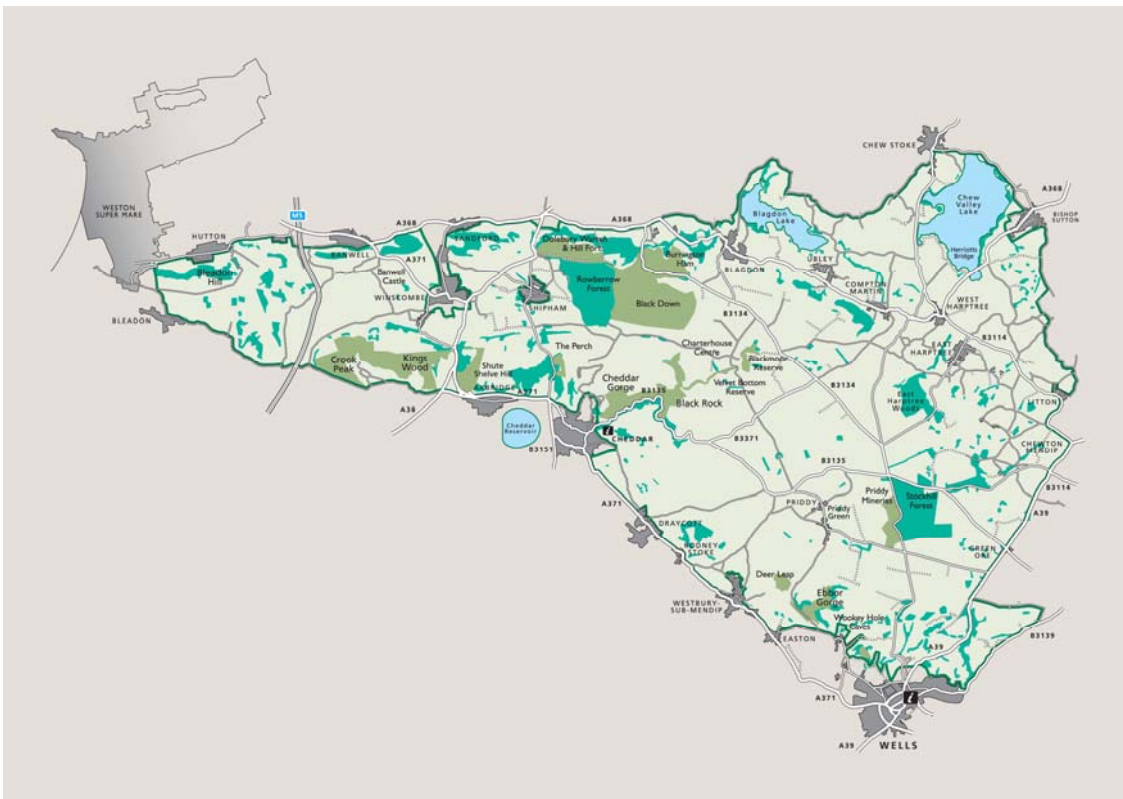
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The Scoping Report for the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment

1. The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Mendip Hills AONB was designated in 1972. It covers 198sq kms of the Mendip Hills from Bleadon in the west to the A39 in the east.

The AONB Partnership is made up of 16 organisations committed to seeking to implement the AONB Management Plan (Appendix 1). The Partnership also has other stakeholders who are consulted in the development and delivery of the Management Plan (Appendix 2)



2. The SEA Methodology

The methodology used for this SEA is based on the Guidance to English AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of AONB Management Plans, provided by Natural England July 2007.

As stated in the guidance:

*The purpose of a SEA is to ensure that land-use plans and programmes, that are likely to have significant effects on the environment, are subjected to a **strategic level** (high*

and overarching) assessment of options and alternative courses of action during plan preparation in order to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects.

The Management Plan process fulfils many of the requirements set out in the SEA process. As the Management Plan is aiming to conserve and enhance the landscape, it is already putting the environment at the heart of the plan-making process, which is a key aim of SEA, and the steps for both processes have strong parallels.

Proposed stages in the process

1. Scoping

1.1 Submission of scoping report to Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage (December 2012–January 2013) AONB Partnership and key stakeholders

1.2 Identification of current Management Plan issues and objectives (December 2012 – February 2013)

Developed through

- consultation with the AONB Partnership through questionnaire survey
- analysis of significant regional and local plans and strategies
- Individual meetings with key stakeholder authorities and bodies.

1.3 Analysis of responses from scoping report consultees (February 2013)

2. Developing SEA Environmental Report and undertaking Appropriate Assessment (February – April 2013)

Parallel process alongside the drafting of the AONB Management Plan

3. Consultation on SEA Environmental Report and AONB Management Plan (June – August 2013)

4. Analysis of responses to consultation (Sept– Dec 2013)

5. Summary of issues raised from SEA consultation produced as appendix document to AONB Management Plan (December 2013) demonstrating how it has informed the Management Plan.

6. AONB Management Plan (including appendices) approved by AONB Partnership (January 2014) and submitted for adoption by local authorities and partner organisations by March 31st 2014.

7. AONB Management Plan published and launched – April 2014.

3. The context scope

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes

The scope for this work has been considering what are the main directives, plans and strategies that influence the aspects of the AONB that the new Management Plan is seeking to address. Often the documents are further refined by interpretation at a 'lower level' (e.g. national strategies translated into regional or local strategies). These plans and documents may be helpful when considering in-combination effects in appropriate assessment.

Management Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT- List of Policies, Plans and Programmes

Title of Policy, Plan, Programme or Legislation	Summary	Relevance to Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan
INTERNATIONAL		
Agenda 21 (1992)	A comprehensive plan of action adopted by more than 178 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Agenda 21 underlines the growing awareness of the need to adopt a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development issues.	The AONB Management Plan must reflect contributions towards achieving the goal of sustainable development. Includes requirements for countries to adopt integrated strategies to ensure compliance with legislation relating to sustainable development, to promote the use of renewable energy systems and to build public environmental awareness.
Convention on Biodiversity (1993)	The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force on 29 December 1993. It has 3 main objectives: 1. The conservation of biological diversity 2. The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity 3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources	The AONB Management Plan will need to include policies which will contribute to the revised global targets known as the Aichi targets.
EUROPEAN		
European Landscape Convention Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007	Created by the Council of Europe, the convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, and European co-operation on landscape issues. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.	The Management Plan should show how a landscape approach, embracing both natural and cultural influences and the way people perceive them, is essential to the integrated delivery of a healthy natural environment that delivers the ecosystem goods and services that society needs

<p>The Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) (2008)</p>	<p>Along with subsequent Directives, this Directive aims to create an integrated approach to waste management in order to reduce waste production. It requires all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without harming human health.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan should reflect the need to reduce the overall amount of waste produced within the area as well as the need to sustainably dispose of waste that is produced. Member states shall take the necessary measures designed to achieve the following targets: by 2020 the preparing for reuse and the recycling of waste materials such as at least paper, metal, plastic and glass from households and possibly from other origins as far as these waste streams are similar to waste from households, shall be increased to a minimum of overall 50% by weight.'</p>
<p>The Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) (2009)</p>	<p>Provides a framework for the conservation of wild birds in Europe. The Directive requires the identification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to conserve rare or vulnerable species.</p>	<p>The Management Plan must ensure that SPAs are identified, maintained and afforded suitable protection.</p>
<p>The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (1992)</p>	<p>Aims to ensure biodiversity by conserving natural habitats of wild flora and fauna. It requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be identified which form a network of protected areas called Natura 2000 along with SPAs. Projects are only permitted on such sites under exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>The Management Plan must not designate projects for development in either SACs or SPAs unless there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development.</p>
<p>2020 European Biodiversity Strategy (2011)</p>	<p>On 4 May 2011 the European Commission adopted a new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020. There are six main targets, and 20 actions to help Europe reach its goal. Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in the EU, with around one in four species currently threatened with extinction and 88% of fish stocks over-exploited or significantly depleted.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to include policies which will contribute to the revised EU targets.</p>
<p>UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters 'The Aarhus Convention' Adopted (June 1998)</p>	<p>Acknowledges the need for public participation in environmental issues and grants the public's rights to access to justice and information on the environment.</p>	<p>Public participation in the preparation and implementation of the Management Plan should be arranged.</p>

<p>The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (2000)</p>	<p>Aims to protect and enhance Europe's water environment. Its main objectives are to improve water quality and resource use, reduce flooding risk and improve aquatic habitats for wildlife. Establishes a framework for the long-term protection of inland surface waters, transitional and coastal waters and groundwater.</p> <p>The frameworks implementation in the UK also covers alien invasive species, including aquatic and marginal plants, invertebrates and fish.</p>	<p>Nearly all inland and coastal waters are required to reach 'good' status by 2015.</p> <p>The Management Plan should promote sustainable management of the water environment by carefully considering current land use and future climate scenarios, to minimise the effects of flooding and drought events and to facilitate long term improvements in water quality, including the protection of groundwater. The control of alien species also needs to be addressed.</p>
<p>The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)</p>	<p>Aims to identify and mitigate significant environment effects arising from certain plans and programmes. Emphasis is placed on integrating environmental sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes.</p>	<p>The Directive requires that an SEA be carried out on the AONB Management Plan and an Environment Report produced.</p>
<p>NATIONAL</p>		
<p>LEGISLATION</p>		
<p>Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) (1981)</p>	<p>Principal legislative mechanism for the protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Requires any land that is identified as being of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features to be classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and afforded certain protection against damaging measures.</p>	<p>There are 27 SSSIs in the Mendip Hills AONB including ancient woodlands and unimproved limestone grasslands. The Management Plan must recognise their statutory importance and strive to ensure they are adequately protected.</p>
<p>Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.</p>	<p>The CROW Act underlines the importance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and introduces a statutory duty for all AONB local authorities to prepare and publish AONB Management Plans. Gives additional protection to SSSIs.</p>	<p>The Mendip Hills is in the management areas of 5 local authorities.</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan acts as a guide for these local authorities, statutory agencies and the people who live and work in the area.</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan is a requirement under Part 4 of the CROW Act 2000 and will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of Section 89(5) of the CROW Act 2000, for adoption in March 2014.</p>

<p>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</p>	<p>Section 40 of the Act requires that <i>“Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”</i></p> <p>Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan must include policies which show how the Board will demonstrate compliance with this legislation. Reference will be made to the S.41 list in drawing up priority species and habitats in the Mendip Hills AONB.</p>
<p>Climate Change Act 2008 Department for Energy and Climate</p>	<p>Makes provision for the development and promotion of a sustainable energy policy. Energy efficiency measures identified in any other areas should be highlighted and promoted. The Government has a statutory aim to cut emissions by at least 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 – below the 1990 baseline;</p>	<p>Energy efficiency measures need to be integrated into any new housing development designated within the Mendip Hills AONB.</p>
<p>Traffic Management Act (2004)</p>	<p>Intended to provide the basis for better conditions for all road users through the proactive management of the national and local road network. Part 2 of the act places a duty on local authorities to keep traffic flowing.</p>	<p>The needs of all road users should be addressed. The promotion of safe and viable alternatives to car travel will assist in reducing congestion, fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions</p>
<p>Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act (2004)</p>	<p>Affords powers to address the sustainability of buildings. The Act ensures sustainability standards are incorporated into renovation work and seeks to improve crime resistance measures that are built into buildings.</p>	<p>Renovation work specified within the Management Plan should reflect the need to create sustainable and secure buildings.</p>
<p>Localism Act 2011 Department for Communities and Local Government</p>	<p>The Localism Act includes a number of important provisions: decentralisation and strengthening local democracy community empowerment a radical re-boot of the planning system including neighbourhood planning changes to social housing policies</p>	<p>Any communities developed within the region of the AONB should be sustainable, well-designed, high quality and attractive places in which people will positively choose to live and work.</p>

PLANS AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

<p>Local Transport White Paper Department for Transport (2011)</p>	<p>The Local Transport White Paper sets out the Government's vision for a sustainable local transport system that supports the economy and reduces carbon emissions. It explains how the Government is placing localism at the heart of the transport agenda, taking measures to empower local authorities when it comes to tackling these issues in their areas.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan needs to reflect the Government's commitment to reducing people's dependence on cars and to develop an efficient transport system. Public transport links within the AONB should be considered and reviewed.</p>
<p>The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.</p>	<p>Aims to improve and protect ambient air quality in the UK by setting national objectives for major air pollutants. The Strategy involves the production of Local Air Quality Strategies at a local level and the designation of Air Quality Management Areas where objectives are not being adequately met.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan should seek to ensure that air pollution identified around conurbation areas is managed and where required, steps are taken to alleviate air quality problems. Relevant Local Transport Plans by the surrounding local authorities should be considered. The strategy identifies explicit targets for eight pollutants to protect human health and targets for two pollutants to protect vegetation and ecosystems.</p>
<p>Waste Policy Review Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (2011)</p>	<p>Describes the Government's vision for managing waste better and decoupling the link between economic growth and increased waste.</p>	<p>The Management Plan must reflect the pressing need to reduce waste to landfill and increase recycling. The region is under pressure to import waste from surrounding urban areas, particularly to fill former quarry areas. Alternative methods of waste handling and minimisation should be given proper consideration To recycle or compost 50% of household waste by 2020</p>
<p>Game Plan: A Strategy For Delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity Objectives Social Exclusion Unit, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2002)</p>	<p>Sets the challenge of moving from 30% of the population being regularly active in 1998 (5 times a week, 30 minutes, moderate intensity) to 70% in 2020.</p>	<p>The Management Plan should recognise the benefits of sport and physical activity to society (improved social inclusion, better health) and attempt to increase grassroots participation. The AONB has a good distribution of footpaths and public rights of way, outdoor tourism and associated activities should be promoted within the Management Plan.</p>

<p>Biodiversity 2020 – A strategy for England’s Wildlife and ecosystem services Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011)</p>	<p>Outlines a program to ensure that biodiversity considerations become embedded in all main sectors of public policy. Stresses that biodiversity needs should be integrated in the development of sustainable communities, urban green space and the built environment.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and methods of enhancement should be key considerations in the AONB Management Plan. Agriculture, water, woodland and urban areas should all be considered with respect to improving biodiversity levels. Sets out measures for a set of biodiversity indicators: <i>‘Measuring progress: baseline assessment’</i> to be used to monitor progress towards the goal of improved national biodiversity.</p>
<p>Sustainable framework for UK aviation Department for Transport (2011)</p>	<p>Consultation scoping document for future policy framework for the development of airport capacity in the UK over the next 25-30 years. The paper identifies the role that regional airports have in providing airport capacity in the South West.</p>	<p>Bristol Airport is identified as having potential for growth to satisfy demand and this potential, and its implications should be acknowledged in the AONB Management Plan. Identifies potential for Bristol Airport to expand from around 4 million passengers per annum up to levels approaching 12 million passengers per annum, with an associated runway extension and new terminal buildings.</p>
<p>Healthy lives, healthy people White Paper Department for Health (2011)</p>	<p>Sets out the key principles for supporting the public to make better and more informed choices with regards to their health.</p>	<p>Proposals outlined in the Management Plan that affect the environment, social networks, socio-economic circumstances and local facilities all impact upon the health of local people.</p>
<p>Mainstreaming Sustainable Development Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011)</p>	<p>Outlines the Government’s strategy that enables the UK to work towards the goal of achieving sustainable development.</p>	<p>Sustainability principles should be integral to the AONB Management Plan and should form the basis for the SEA objectives. Government strategy expands on the traditional view of sustainable development which embraces environment, society and economy equally and implies a duty to respond to pressing scientific and environmental concerns. The AONB Management Plan should reflect this.</p>

<p>Natural Environment White Paper Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011)</p>	<p>The Natural Environment White Paper is a statement outlining the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years, together with proposals for practical action to deliver that ambition.</p> <p>Alongside the White Paper, the Government published its response to the Lawton Review. The Review, <i>Making Space for Nature</i>, found that nature in England is highly fragmented and unable to respond effectively to new pressures, such as climate and population change. The white paper encourages increasing the size of wildlife sites and creating new site, including woodland.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan should include consideration of the objectives and actions set out in the White Paper</p> <p>Large scale landscape management can demonstrate partnership working with other organisations and across traditional boundaries to get the best possible natural environment outcomes for the AONB and local people.</p>
<p>Securing Biodiversity Natural England (2008)</p>	<p>This guide explains a new framework which has been developed to enhance the recovery of priority habitats and species in England (published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006), thereby contributing to the delivery of the England Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>The framework has been developed and endorsed by the England Biodiversity Group and wider partnership. It is the starting point for a more integrated approach to biodiversity conservation in England, building on the strengths of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process and improving those areas where insufficient progress was being made.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan should include consideration of the objectives and actions set out in the guidance.</p>
<p>Green Infrastructure Guidance Natural England (2009) http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShopN</p>	<p>Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance articulates our position in relation to green infrastructure planning and delivery, which is increasingly recognised as an essential part of sustainable spatial planning. This is due in no small part to the role of green infrastructure as a 'life support system', able to deliver multiple environmental functions, and to play a key part in</p>	

	<p>adapting to and mitigating climate change. This guidance has been produced to support Natural England's frontline staff in their work with local authorities and green infrastructure partnerships.</p>	
<p>State of the Countryside report 2010 Commission for Rural Communities (2010)</p>	<p>This document is an overview of the trends in environment, economy, social issues encountered in England's Countryside.</p>	
<p>UK Forestry Standard Forestry Commission (2011)</p>	<p>The United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS) is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. The UKFS, supported by its series of Guidelines, outlines the context for forestry in the UK, sets out the approach of the UK governments to sustainable forest management, defines standards and requirements, and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring – including national and international reporting.</p> <p>By meeting the Requirements of the UKFS, forest and woodland owners, managers and practitioners can demonstrate that forestry operations and activities are both legal and sustainable.</p> <p>The Standard requires that native woodlands to managed to ensure their biodiversity is maintained or enhanced; protecting or extending semi-natural features and paying particular attention to ancient semi-natural woodlands. Ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) are derived from the original forest cover of the British Isles, and have had more or less continuously tree-covered use. They are especially significant for biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage, and reflect centuries of interactions between human activities and the environment. ASNW in particular are a valuable resource of relatively undisturbed soils, which are likely to be of high</p>	

	biodiversity value.	
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NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS/ PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

<p>National Planning Policy Framework Department for Communities and Local Government (2012)</p>	<p>The Government has published the National Planning Policy Framework.. This is a key part of reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth. The Framework replaces existing Planning Policy Guidance and Statements.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the revised planning policies.</p>
<p>National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011)</p>	<p>Set out national policy against which proposals for major energy projects will be assessed and decided upon.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the planning policies.</p>
<p>Agricultural Waste Regulations DEFRA (2006)</p>	<p>These regulations came into force on 15th May 2006. The regulations ensure that all agricultural waste is either recovered or disposed of in manner that protects human health and the environment.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS/PLANNING POLICY/GUIDANCE

<p>Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) SW Regional Assembly (approved 2006)</p>	<p>Currently still part of the Development Plan until formally revoked by the Government. The strategy established regionally specific policies, and addresses regional or sub-regional issues that may cross county, unitary authority or district boundaries.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies until RSS revoked</p>
<p>Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Somerset County Council/Exmoor National Park Authority (1991 – 2011)</p>	<p>Sets out development policies relevant to parts of the AONB in Somerset. Policies saved until Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) adopted.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies until Structure Plan superseded</p>
<p>Joint Replacement Structure Plan B&NES, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (2002)</p>	<p>Still considered valid until revoked or LDFs adopted.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies until Structure Plan superseded</p>

<p>Joint Waste Core Strategy B&NES, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (2011)</p>	<p>Sets out policies about where major waste facilities should be located.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>
<p>Somerset Waste Core Strategy (Draft) Somerset County Council (2012)</p> <p>Somerset Waste Local Plan Somerset County Council (2005)</p> <p>Somerset Minerals Plan Somerset County Council (Options 2012)</p>	<p>Currently under Examination. Once adopted it will provide a strategy for waste management throughout Somerset.</p> <p>Some policies remain valid until adoption of the Somerset Waste Core Strategy.</p> <p>Currently at Options stage aiming to identify relevant issues and potential options relating to future minerals development within Somerset. Once adopted the Plan will provide the strategy for safeguarding and managing Minerals in Somerset.</p>	<p>Waste management issues may arise in the AONB and the AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p> <p>Minerals extraction is an important economic activity in the AONB with significant environmental implications. The AONB Management Plan will need to address this in the light of the relevant Minerals Plan policies</p>
<p>Somerset Minerals Local Plan Somerset County Council (2004)</p> <p>Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy B&NES Council (2012)</p>	<p>Some policies remain valid until adoption of the Somerset Minerals Plan.</p> <p>Document awaiting Examination. When adopted it will set out a spatial strategy for B&NES and a range of policies to manage all types of development.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>
<p>Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan B&NES Council (2007)</p>	<p>Saved policies and proposal maps form the basis for development management decisions.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>
<p>Mendip District Local Development Framework-Core Strategy (Draft) Mendip District Council (2011)</p>	<p>Currently at the Preferred Options stage which sets out the amount of new development that the area will accommodate in the period to 2026, broad locations, and a range of policies to manage all</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>

<p>Mendip District Local Plan Mendip District Council (2002)</p>	<p>types of development.</p> <p>Some policies remain valid until adoption of the Core Strategy for Mendip District.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>
<p>North Somerset Core Strategy North Somerset Council (2012)</p> <p>North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007</p> <p>Sedgemoor Core Strategy Sedgemoor District Council (2011)</p> <p>Sedgemoor District Local Plan Sedgemoor District Council (2004)</p>	<p>Sets out a spatial strategy for North Somerset to guide Decisions on all types of development in North Somerset.</p> <p>Sets out land allocations for various forms of development as well as policies to protect valued landscapes, habitats and buildings. Some policies superseded by the Core Strategy but most still valid.</p> <p>Sets out a spatial strategy for Sedgemoor</p> <p>Some policies remain valid.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan will need to reflect the relevant policies</p>

4. The environmental baseline

It is intended to gather Baseline information in line with SEA guidance on the following SEA topics: Biodiversity, fauna and flora; Population and Human Health; Water; Soil; Air; Climatic Factors; Material Assets; Cultural Heritage and Landscape.

This Baseline will provide the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and help to identify environmental problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. Information about trends, where available, will also be collected to enable effects to be predicted.

The issues highlighted are those in the current Management Plan and these will be revised as appropriate following the current Management Plan review scoping exercise.

The SEA Environmental Report will also include, where appropriate, targets along with indicators were suggested to enable these objectives to be measured. This formed the basis for monitoring the implementation of the MP.

SEA Topic	Aspects/objectives	Indicators	Issues and targets	Data sources
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Protected areas	Extent of area within AONB protected by classes of designations, international, national and local	No targets	Designation boundaries available MAGIC
	Species distribution/population changes	% change in key species distribution/populations UK priorities for Mendip Hills or character species	No targets	SWT/AWT local data
	SSSI Condition		At least 60% in favourable	Natural England

			condition with at least 98% in favourable or recovering condition by 2020	
	Ancient woodlands	Extent of ancient woodlands and condition Woodland Grant Schemes	Promotion of preservation and extension of semi natural habitats	Ancient woodland (woodland cover since 1600AD;Ancient semi natural woodland or Ancient replanted woodland www.englishnature.org.uk/pubs/gis/gis_register.asp Woodland Grant schemes MAGIC
	NE Habitat Inventory (UK Priority habitat inventory)	% of UK Priority Habitats in favourable condition		Information on condition, extent and distribution of UK Priority habitats. www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans Natural England
Population	Census population estimates	% change in pop	No targets	Census data 2011 awaiting publication
Indicators of deprivation	Indicators of multiple deprivation	Census period Regional and national comparisons		Census data 2011 awaiting publication
	Profile of rural workers in various rural industries % in agriculture, forestry, hunting % in Mining and Quarrying % in hotels and	Agricultural census annual trends Census trends	Loss of skilled rural labour Declining agricultural community	Census data 2011 awaiting publication Agricultural Survey (2010) Defra

	restaurants %in other classes % in 'hobby' farming			
Human health	Health and well being	Health Poverty Index and Index of Deprivation Health	No targets	DCLG Index of deprivation – Health Dept of health, Health Poverty Index www.hpi.org.uk
Soil and land quality	Soil contamination	Contaminated land	No targets	Contaminated land registers/inspection strategy data held by local authorities
	Soil Management Plan	Number of soil management plans	No targets	Voluntary ERDP option that contributes 3 points/ha towards ELS or OELS points targets. Lack of local level soil vulnerability and risk erosion mapping.
	National River Water quality Monitoring			General Quality Assessment scheme (GQA) national scheme for water quality classification in rivers and canals www.environment.agency.gov.uk
	Rainfall	Amount of rainfall – water resource	No targets	Environment Agency H&T data
Air	Air quality	Rural air quality parameters	No targets	Air quality Archive www.airquality.co.uk/archive/data
Climate Factors	Greenhouse gas emissions	M tonnes carbon equivalent	Govt policy is to reduce emissions by 34% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050.	DCLG Sustainable Development Framework Indicators www.sustainabledevelopment.gov.uk/progress/indicators
	Energy generation	Energy generation from	2009 Renewable	DECC

		renewable resources	energy Directive sets a UK target of 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2020.	www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/index.asp
Material assets	% of car ownership			Census data 2011 awaiting publication
	Light pollution	Increase in light pollution within the AONB		CPRE
	Tourism	% Employed in tourism		Defra
Heritage	Historic protected areas	% SAMs in favourable condition and at risk		English Heritage/HER data
	Listed buildings	Listed and unlisted buildings at risk		English Heritage/HER data
	Conservation areas	Conservation areas at risk		English Heritage Heritage Counts annual regional summary of heritage value
Landscape	Grasslands within the agricultural setting	% of AONB in grassland types (permanent, temporary, rough grazing)		Defra farm statistics
	Land management incentives	% of land managed under higher tier agri-environment schemes ELS/HLS		Defra - Environmental scheme data
	Tranquility	Changes in extent of		CPRE

		tranquil areas		
	Woodland within the agricultural setting	% of AONB in woodland		Defra farm statistics

5. Environmental Objectives

Each existing and proposed Management Plan objective will be assessed against the eleven objectives in the NE Guidance to determine whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on the environmental assets of the AONB

Environmental objectives

- E1** To protect and where practical enhance biodiversity (habitats)
- E2** To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)
- E3** To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)
- E4** To safeguard human health
- E5** To protect and enhance soil quality
- E6** To safeguard the water environment
- E7** To protect air and climate
- E8** To maintain cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)
- E9** To protect and enhance landscape
- E10** To protect material assets including natural resources
- E11** To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships

6. Statement of key issues

The following table lists the key environmental issues as identified in the current AONB Management Plan and will be reviewed through the current consultation work.

Issues have been grouped using the existing Management Plan themes. The review of the Management Plan may propose alternative theme headings.

Themes	Issues
Climate change	Research Adaptation and mitigation
Landscape Quality	Retaining wild, remote character Retaining field boundaries Developing rural skills Awareness and appreciation of special qualities Supporting local products linked to conserving and enhancing the landscape
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Maintaining rich diversity of habitats and species Improving habitat management Farming - agri environment schemes Management of scrub/bracken Conserving geological sites and features
Historic Environment and cultural heritage	Research and recording of historic landscape Management of sites, buildings, features Celebrating cultural heritage
Farming and land uses	Woodland management Changes in farming and agricultural schemes

	Quarrying – restoration Water management
Access, Recreation, and tourism	Informal recreation Management of recreational activity Sustainable tourism development
Development and Transport	Retaining character and protecting landscape Development pressure from urban fringes Rural economic development Renewable energy production Tranquillity – light pollution Minerals and waste planning Traffic management Public transport
Participation	Opportunities for volunteering Young Ranger scheme Educational resource

Appendix 1

Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee:

Somerset County Council

Bath and North East Somerset Council

North Somerset Council

Sedgemoor District Council

Mendip District Council

Mendip Hills AONB Unit

Natural England

National Farmers Union
Country Landowners Association
National Trust
Somerset Wildlife Trust/Avon Wildlife Trust
West of England Rural Network/Somerset Community Council
Mendip Society (also represents Council for the Protection of Rural England)
Somerset Parish Representative
North Somerset Parish Representative
Bath and North East Somerset Parish Representative

The 3 Parish reps represent the following 28 Parish Councils:

Axbridge
Banwell
Blagdon
Bleadon
Butcombe
Burrington
Cheddar
Chew Stoke
Chewton Mendip
Churchill
Compton Bishop
Compton Martin
East Harptree
Hinton Blewett
Hutton
Litton
Loxton

Nempnett Thrubwell
Priddy
Rodney Stoke
Shipham
St Cuthbert Out
Stowey Sutton
Ubley
Wells
Westbury sub Mendip
West Harptree
Winscombe and Sandford

Appendix 2 – Other key stakeholders – Businesses and organisations who own or manage land or who are active in the AONB

Aggregate Industries UK Ltd
Avon Association of Local Councils
Bristol Water plc
Cheddar Gorge and Caves
Cheddar Valley Access Group
Council for the Preservation of Rural England
Council of Southern Caving Clubs
Defra
Dry Stone Walling Association
Fernhill Farm
Forestry Commission
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Go Wild
Hansons
Hawk and Owl Trust

Mendip Byways and Bridleways Association
Mendip Outdoor Pursuits
Mendip Ramblers
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Sedgemoor Ramblers
Singleton Birch
Somerset Association of Local Councils
Somerset Earth Science Centre
Tudway Quilter Estate
Visit England
Waldegrave Estate
Wells and Mendip Museum
Wills Estate
Woodland Trust
Woodspring Ramblers
Wookey Hole Caves
Yeo Valley Organic Company Ltd