

Appendix 2 - Management Plan Review, Statement of Consultation

Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan Review Questionnaire Responses 2013 2018

An online questionnaire was sent to the Partnership Committee members and key stakeholders in January 2013 and repeated in January 2018.

Below is a summary of the responses:

Q1 Respondents

2013	2018
26 responses	19 responses

Q2 How relevant is the Plan to your work?

Very	11	42%	6	35%
Fairly	12	46%	10	60%
Not at all	1	4%	1	15%
No response	2	8%		

Q3 What are the most relevant themes to your work?

Climate change	4	15%	NA	NA
Landscape Quality	17	65%	15	78%
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	17	65%	12	70%
Historic Environment	11	42%	9	53%
Farming and land uses	20	77%	9	53%
Access, Recreation and Tourism	15	57%	14	82%
Development and Transport	11	42%	7	41%
Natural Resources	NA	NA	10	59%
Participation	6	23%	11	65%
Making it happen	2	7%	NA	NA
No response	2	7%	NA	NA

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Q4 What has worked well as a result of the Plan and how was it useful?

2013		2018	
Responses	10 (See comment and response table below)	Responses	16 (See comment and response table below)
No response	16	No response	3

Q5 What has not worked and why?

2013		2018	
Responses	10 (See comment and response table below)	Responses	16 (See comment and response table below)
No response	16	No response	3

Q6 Do you feel the Plan has made a difference?

	2013		2018	
Yes	8	30%	12	63%
No	3	11%	1	5%
Don't know	1	4%	6	32%
No response	4	15%	NA	NA

Q7 How often do you refer to the Delivery Plan?

	2013		2018	
Often	0	0%	0	0%
Sometimes	6	23%	11	57%
Never	5	19%	8	30%
No response	15	57%	NA	NA

Q8 Are you or your organisation actively contributing to the delivery of the Management Plan?

	2013		2018	
Yes	8	30%	15	79%
Sometimes	2	7%	3	16%
Don't know	2	7%	0	0%
No response	14	54%	NA	NA

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Q9 Any other comments on the Management Plan/Delivery Plan or review process?

2013		2018	
Comments table below)	6 (See comment and response	Responses table below)	12 (See comment and response
No response	20	No response	7

2018 AONB Management Plan Review– COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Question	Comments received	AONB Unit Response
4. What has worked well as a result of the plan and how was it useful?	The work of SWT sits very well with the themes and objectives of the management plan, which can be used to add weight to our cause. In particular, support of the Trust's work on the mapping and restoration of ecological networks is specifically stated in the 15 year vision for the Mendip Hills and the Biodiversity and Geodiversity Objectives (BG2). This has strengthened the response of SWT to planning applications within the AONB. The management plan also helps us to target our work and demonstrate to funders the need for projects that deliver management plan objectives. In addition, funding provided by the AONB unit for the Save our Magnificent Meadows project and the Mendip Hills Facilitation Group work has helped support delivery of many management plan objectives. Likewise, support through the Mendip Hills Fund has enabled the design and production of a Harridge Woods nature trail leaflet and also the redesign and installation of an interpretation panel at Mascalls Wood. The AONB have also helped to fund improvements to the infrastructure along the Mendip Way where it passes through Black Rock reserve as well as providing a visitor counter to help quantify the amount of footfall on the reserve.	Examples like this need to be highlighted to other partners as examples of how to use the Management Plan.
	Encouraging the involvement of local people and the wider community in the management of the AONB, and increasing volunteering opportunities. Important to have wider community	Maintain objectives for Participation and the current philosophy of the AONB Unit to increase its engagement with the community at all levels.

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	support	
	Useful to have all information in one place	Comment welcomed.
	As a reasonably significant landowner in the AONB, the partnership approach engendered by the Management Plan helps support NT's property management and wider countryside objectives. NT has embarked on a 10 Year Strategy focused on Land, Outdoors & Nature which seeks to implement and expand on the principles of the Lawton Report: "bigger, better, more & joined"	Ensure partnership work is maintained with organisations at strategic and tactical levels.
	Using it to inform responses to planning applications and aspirations for the village of Cheddar and surrounding communities	Addressing Special Qualities through the management plan will help local communities understand the potential impacts of proposed development.
	Choice of tasks by volunteer task leader	Producing a range of practical tasks that address the Special Qualities adds meaning and context to the choice on offer.
	wildlife corridor, yellow rattle seeding project, young rangers and their links to us, help with our Blade shearing tournament	Ensure ongoing commitment in the plan to Young Rangers and rural skills.
	Landscape Quality: the ranger training days for dry stone walling has increased the opportunities to improve these features. Also, a closer association between the AONB and the Mendip Society has encouraged the shared use of resources and more opportunities for the healthy and beneficial participation in volunteering. B & G: Mendip Rocks has encouraged a wider participation of people to take part in events that were unknown to them before.	Ensure partnership work is maintained with organisations at strategic and tactical levels.
	Just being out	Comment welcomed.
	Unable to comment	
	Access and Recreation	Comment welcomed.
	Having a management plan is necessary for NSC	Comment welcomed.
	Working closer with the AONB. Using volunteers. Assisting with "Rocktober". Assisting with planning matters	Ensure the plan recognises that a wide spectrum of participation opportunities is needed.
	Planning issues. Mendip Hills Grants. Close working with other agencies, etc eg. Longleat at Cheddar. Fundraising is also on the up. Volunteering.	Ensure partnership work is maintained with organisations at strategic and tactical levels. Ensure partners appreciate how the plan can be used for their advantage.
	Joint Plan with clear statements and facts regarding special qualities etc. Useful references/hooks to support proposals/bids and influence policy and setting of priorities.	2018 State of the AONB report will support the management plan.
	Management Plan referred to when making comments on visual impact of proposed development from/to AONB	Landscape Character Assessment will support the management plan.

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5. What has not worked and why? E.g. lack of buy-in from partners/change of circumstances?	BG3 – increase monitoring and awareness of biodiversity resource. We do this, but it could be more joined up between partners of the AONB. As an objective included in the management plan it should have a greater drive from the AONB. The AONB unit could also generally take more of a coordinating role in terms of the Partnership, helping to identify opportunities for joint working and development of projects that deliver benefits for multiple partners. SWT would be keen to be involved in such initiatives.	Noted. Spread of projects, ideas and initiatives between Partnership members should be a key communication aim for the AONB Unit.
	Not sure if more sustainable methods of travel to and around the AONB has been developed? Although not entirely within hands of AONB	AONB Unit has focused on regional trails like the Mendip Way for people to experience the area sustainably and at links from the Strawberry Line. Other sustainable access routes like the Limestone Link, that deliver multiple benefits to the area should be a priority.
	Awareness of the document from other officers in our organisation	Ensure Communication is a key theme for the AONB Unit recognised in the business plan and annual activity plans.
	There is still scope for better joined-up working between partners and landowners. However steps are currently being made to improving on this	Noted. Spread of projects, ideas and initiatives between Partnership members should be a key communication aim for the AONB Unit.
	Not aware of shortcomings	Noted
	Don't know	Noted.
	staying intergrated with the project - time	Comment welcomed.
	I don't have the necessary information to comment.	Comment welcomed.
	Not having weekend opportunities	Need to ensure volunteering opportunities are increased.
	I'm a full time employee so only weekend work is an option	Need to ensure volunteering opportunities are increased.
	The plan is not part of our day-to-day work - to do so it needs to link directly to our corporate priorities.	As part of management plan review process LA officers that sit on the OSG need to ensure their organisation's corporate priorities are reflected.
	Uphill struggle with planning. Problems at Shute Shelf Tunnel with Natural England.	Noted
	Local knowledge about the AONB could be higher.	Ensure Communication is a key theme for the AONB Unit recognised in the business plan and annual activity plans
	Awareness of how the Plan is being delivered and how it is having an impact needs to be better understood. There is role for partners to understand and communicate this more effectively.	Noted. Spread of projects, ideas and initiatives between Partnership members should be a key communication aim for the AONB Unit.
9. Any other comments on the Management	It is important for it to be reviewed and refreshed regularly.	On a 5 year cycle at present.

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Plan/Delivery Plan or review process?		
	Need help to get the council to sort out dangerous potholed lake at the end of our farm drive, several cyclists have been injured! they put Road Closed !!	Noted
	My involvement is as a volunteer Ranger. I've not had need to refer to the plan. We are involved at a practical level rather than strategic review or delivery...which may constitute a somewhat feeble excuse for ignorance on a day to day level, but it's an honest reflection of a Ranger's needs.	Regular updates and reminders about the plan need to be sent to all volunteers as they have a key role as ambassadors for the area, and their practical tasks, project involvement and events explained in the context of the management plan.
	It needs to link to wider GI strategy; needs to incorporate 'value' e.g. natural capital as a core principle; must reflect my organisation's priorities; needs to be concise and punchy	Comment welcomed. As part of the review a Strategic Environmental Assessment will occur to ensure other relevant plans are linked to.
	We must impress that development just outside area affects us more than first realized.	Planning applications 'within the setting' are reviewed.
	Clear time table for when input/responses required and if specialist input required that should be clearly identified eg ecologists, planning, landscape so that officer time can be secured.	Statement of Community Consultation to be provided to the Officer Support Group in March 2018, to support review timetable agreed by the AONB Partnership in November 2017.

2013 AONB Management Plan Review– COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Question	Comments received	AONB Unit Response
3. 2 nd part of question: Are there any significant gaps in the content of these themes or elsewhere in the Plan?	05 water 20 It would always be useful, from a planning perspective, if development-related references were strengthened but I appreciate the plan has to be balanced and cover a broad range of issues 22 Not once the new plan recognises the changed policy context and legislative framework since 2010	Will address issue of importance of water and management of it in revised Plan Consider strengthening by using web linked references Comments were regarding current Plan written in 2008 adopted in 2009 - Will reference changed policy in revised Plan
4. What has worked well	01 The plan gives a direction for the AONB team, which allows	Need to clarify and ensure that partners understand that the

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<p>as a result of the plan and how was it useful?</p>	<p>them to prioritise their work, including fundraising for additional work and giving support to other projects. I think we look at how our work overlaps with the plan rather than the plan directing our work, so it is most useful for identifying areas of possible collaboration.</p> <p>03 As I have not been directly involved in the plan (and only part of the Mendip Hills AONB falls within B&NES) I cannot comment on this but I would have been interested to see a report on the outcomes of the Plan, identifying progress and achievement or not for each action and objective, and providing further data or work where this has been carried out as an action - eg. production of a BAP for the AONB (is a copy available - was one produced?).</p> <p>04 Clearly themed and presented and easy to understand</p> <p>05 Good way to be aware of cross-cutting issues</p> <p>08 Working partnerships were invaluable to us for AONB staff's knowledge and commitment. I worked closely with the Mendip Warden (Les Davies) which achieved positive management of the Perch SSSI.</p> <p>14 It provides an overarching direction for those responsible for land management within the AONB and where as an organisation we can contribute through our work to the delivery of such a plan. It provides local communities within the AONB to share a vision for a protected landscape. It's main help for the National Trust is: - a clear focus on landscape scale protection and improvement - clear approach to developments within and around the AONB</p> <p>19 Planning and Development input from the AONB has been very significant over the last couple of years with some really significant development proposed. The specialised input of the Mendip Hills AONB Team has been really important in achieving recognition of the potential impact of these developments in this nationally important area. The strategic</p>	<p>AONB Management Plan is a Partnership Plan of agreed guiding policy not a Plan for the AONB Unit.</p> <p>This work will be undertaken as part of the review process and before drafting the revised Plan</p> <p>Comment welcomed</p> <p>Comment welcomed</p> <p>Comment welcomed- the AONB staff and partner orgs continue to work with landowners to achieve positive outcomes. Biodiversity section to be strengthened in view of Biodiversity 2020 .</p> <p>Comment welcomed</p> <p>Will include achievements in review of current Management Plan.</p>
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	<p>work on how to protect and enhance Black Down, a really important area within the AONB for landscape, biodiversity, historic heritage and recreation and the likely HLF success (hope that hasn't jinxed it!) providing funding will lead to important and creative work on the ground ensuring this key area is properly protected and enjoyed by people into the future. The volunteering leadership and opportunities offered by the AONB from young rangers to conservation tasks and providing visitor services reflect the best elements of the volunteering/big society initiative until recently enthusiastically championed by central govt. These activities multiply the limited resources of the AONB while engaging local communities and supporting the health and wellbeing agenda.</p> <p>20 The plan has served its purpose and sets a solid framework for actions in the AONB over the period.</p> <p>22 SDF funding has provided very useful local small-scale projects and activities that have helped further the plan.</p> <p>26 The Woodland Trust was pleased to support Policy F2 on trees and woodland in the current plan, and would like to see this carried forward to the new plan, reflecting the comments below.</p>	<p>Comment welcomed</p> <p>Seek to maintain SDF</p> <p>Seek to take forward F2 as currently written. Will liaise further with Woodland Trust in drafting this section.</p>
<p>5. What has not worked and why? E.g. lack of buy-in from partners/change of circumstances?</p>	<p>01 The partnership meetings act as a reporting back on the actions individual organisations have taken to help deliver the plan. However, they are too broad to allow any in depth exploration of a particular subject that could generate more collaborative working. Other opportunities are needed to achieve this added value.</p> <p>04 benefits/usefulness of the Management Plan possibly not advertised/promoted widely enough - B&NES Development Management officers probably not aware of this document</p> <p>05 Lack of resources from our company to engage has limited the effect we might have achieved</p>	<p>Review of Partnership structure and membership is included in 2013/14 Delivery Plan in line with Management Plan review.</p> <p>Once adopted by the 5 local authorities each local authority must ensure that all appropriate staff are fully aware. The LA have statutory duty to protect. AONB Planning Liaison Officer liaises with planning case officers in each authority.</p> <p>Ensure Delivery Plan identifies statutory bodies responsibilities</p>

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	<p>08 Since the loss of the Mendip Warden we have had no further contact from the AONB staff which has been a missed opportunity.</p> <p>14 Not sure many of the partners actually use the plan as they should or refer to it for their own organisations. Partners tend to put their own organisational interests before the AONB partnership plan. There's absolutely no requirement for any of the partners to implement it, adopt it yes but that's the easy bit.</p> <p>20 Lack of buy-in, or committent to delivery, has been an issue for the AONB in my opinion. The AONB Manager has tried valiantly to get more commitment towards delivery by including a section in the Partnership meetings but when I was attending there was still little enthusiasm, seems that they expect the AONB staff to facilitate and deliver. To be successful this is a key issue to address I feel, and as times get harder the more local group that commit to deliver the better.</p> <p>22 Despite huge efforts on the part of the AONB unit there are insufficient active partners contributing to all the objectives. Chronic lack of funds has resulted in too few "flagship" projects around which to rally support and reinvigorate partners efforts.</p> <p>26 Whilst it is important that new woodland creation compliments and respects biodiversity and landscape sensitivities, we should highlight that the Government's Independent Forestry Panel Report has recommended an increase in England's woodland cover from 10% to 15%. Whilst the Mendip Hills AONB may not be seen as a substantial contributor to this target, we would hope that the AONB will consider how it can contribute to this aspiration, particularly on the Mendip Hills scarp. In addition the England Biodiversity Strategy which makes it clear that expansion of priority habitats like native woodland remains a key aim – 'Priority action: Bring</p>	<p>This comment is regarding management of land owned by SCC. Since 2009 when AONB Unit ceased managing SCC land in the AONB no direct contact with this contact but the AONB has retained regular contact with other member of staff. An email has been sent to the person who submitted comment explaining this.</p> <p>Need to ensure Management plan relevant and realistic.</p> <p>Review of Partnership structure and membership is included in 2013/14 Delivery Plan in line with Management Plan review.</p> <p>Review of Partnership structure and membership is included in 2013/14 Delivery Plan in line with Management Plan review.</p> <p>Review introductory section on Woodland and future vision for woodland as part of ecological network (Biodiversity 2020), landscape feature and as part of rural economy.</p>
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	<p>a greater proportion of our existing woodlands into sustainable management and expand the area of woodland in England', (Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystems services, DEFRA 2011, p.26). We would also like to see the new Plan recognise the importance of parkland and woodpasture trees, as well as individual hedgerow trees, for sustainable farming practice. Indeed more tree planting in this regard might fit well with the landscape character of the Mendip Hills plateau.</p>	
<p>6. Do you feel the plan has made a difference?</p>	<p>01 Gives direction and a focus for the partnership.</p> <p>04 has been good in raising greater awareness of the issues affecting the special qualities of the AONB</p> <p>05 Not a huge difference, but gives an overall structure to managing the AONB</p> <p>14 Yes it has in certain circumstances especially when commenting on planning issues. It does provide a clear plan for prioritising work and resources for the AONB team. Overall I feel it has limited impact on the majority who live and work within the AONB - but is that important and is that it's purpose?</p> <p>19 It is clear from the 'what has worked' section above that the plan has had an impact in respect of planning and development (specifically in respect of landscape protection) in and around the AONB. It has supported and given shape to fundraising for project delivery and has supported the volunteering opportunities offered by the AONB. There are many other ways in which the plan will have made a difference so please accept these as examples.</p> <p>20 It has made a difference in that it sets out objectives and actions for the AONB over the plan period. However, I believe that action could still be increased/improved.</p> <p>22 Much of the active partner activity would have taken place anyway without the plan. The plan hasn't been able to motivate partner action. It's also part of the conundrum that CROW</p>	<p>Comment welcomed</p> <p>Comment welcomed</p> <p>Comment welcomed – review of delivery will identify what it has achieved.</p> <p>Comment welcomed - review of delivery will identify what it has achieved but in revised Plan set out more clearly who and how they are expected to use it.</p> <p>Comment welcomed – review of delivery will identify what it has achieved. Will include these examples.</p> <p>Will seek to strengthen and include additional objectives but will put actions in separate Delivery Plan ensuring that SMART.</p> <p>It is implicit in the CRoW Act that the Management Plan will be delivered. Hard to say what would have happened without the Plan – having the Plan has attracted central government grant</p>

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	<p>obligates the production of the plan but not to implement it. Don't know how to get around this?!</p> <p>26 Helped raise the profile of woods and trees in the AONB.</p>	<p>sponsorship and buy in from key partners including local authorities who have made on going financial commitment through agreements with NE and now Defra. This has funded significant number of new initiatives and staffing that has facilitated partnerships and brought in new funding. Review of delivery will identify what it has achieved and will show how level of partner funding over the years.</p>
7. How often do you refer to the delivery plan that accompanies the Management Plan?	N/A	
8. Are you or your organisation actively contributing to the delivery of the Management Plan?	<p>1,4,5,8,14,20,22,26 18,24 3,19 1,4,5,8,19,20,22,26</p> <p>01 BA1.2, BA1.3, BA2.1, FA1.1, FA4.1,FA4.2</p> <p>04 Many of the objectives are reflected/encompassed in adopted and emerging planning policy frameworks (Local Plan, Core Strategy and emerging Placemaking Plan) i.e. CC1 - CC3,L4, B1 - B3, H1 - H3,F1, F2 - F3, A1, A2, D1.</p> <p>05 Indirectly through catchment management approach and working with Avon Wildlife Trust living landscape project</p> <p>08 Biodiversity, working with local groups-SWT Living Landscapes, farmers and ecological surveyors.</p> <p>19 Not sure - arguably by hosting the AONB the County Council is contributing, but I'm not aware that SCC is involved in delivering specific objectives in the Mendip AONB.</p> <p>20 SCC contributes as staff unit host and funder, as well as various staff getting involved in some activities led by the AONB unit.</p>	<p>To be reported in review of current Management Plan delivery</p>

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	<p>22 L2, L3, L4, B1, B2, B3, H1, H2, F1, F2, F3, F4, A1, A2, A5, P1, P2, P3, M1,2,3</p> <p>26 F2</p>	
<p>9. Any other comments on the Management Plan/Delivery Plan or review process?</p>	<p>03 The consultation document "Mendip Hills AONB SEA Scoping Report" (DEC2012) contains reference to the Habitats Directive and states, under the heading "Relevance to Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan" that "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". I would comment that the relevance of the Habitats Directive to the Management Plan goes much further than this. The Plan has a role to play in upholding the Habitats Directive in the wider landscape, and in protecting habitats of bats of the SACS including SACS which fall outside the boundary of the Mendip Hills AONB eg Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. There is some evidence to show bats move between SACs and the availability of connective, good quality habitat for commuting and foraging is key to their success. The legal protection afforded to SAC designated sites extends to habitats on which bats of the SAC depend. It is not only development that may be a threat to these and directly to SACs, but any project authorised or initiated by Mendip Hills AONB either directly or indirectly affecting a SAC or habitat on which the bats depend would require consideration of the habitats regulations. The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan has a role to play in protecting (as required by the Habitats Directive) and strengthening key habitats that provide commuting routes and foraging areas of value to bats of the SACs, for example, hedgerows, woodland edge and grazed pasture. There would also be a potential role in conducting research to establish where these are if not known.</p> <p>04 Need to remove all references to the RSS and ensure that the Management Plan is fully compatible with the objectives/policies of the NPPF.</p> <p>14 I welcome the 'light touch' approach and hope it does not</p>	<p>This comment is regarding the SEA Scoping Report on which there was a separate consultation including to the 3 statutory consultees; NE, EA and EH. The comment that the relevance of the Habitats Directive to the AONB Management Plan is wider than projects for development is accepted and in undertaking the required Habitat Regulations Assessment – all the Management Plan objectives are considered not just development.</p> <p>Other issues raised will be included in consideration of Biodiversity 2020.</p> <p>This will be undertaken as part of review.</p> <p>Comment welcomed – will seek to keep reviewed Management</p>

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	<p>become a laborious process for the few. Keep things simple, relevant and deliverable</p> <p>19 Review needs to be a resource-friendly updating of the existing successful plan.</p> <p>20 It has always been conducted, and led, by the AONB team (principally the Manager). The issue of engagement and activity by others is one I would like to see addressed, and more help and contributions coming forward from others that benefit from the AONB. That said by being driven the AONB Manager the process has always delivered on time.</p> <p>22 Looking forward to reviewing and renewing the sections on The Natural Environment White Paper , Defra Biodiversity 2020 Delivery Plan, New planning legislation and National Planning Policy Framework inc Green Infrastructure, CAP reform post-2013, Revised National Character Area profiles, Ecosystem goods and services and landscape-scale approach, Localism etc. I'm also keen to look again at locally determined NIAs</p>	<p>Plan to similar number of pages as current Plan.</p> <p>Comment welcomed – will seek to keep reviewed Management Plan to similar number of pages as current Plan.</p> <p>Issue is time for all partners concerned. Will target key organisations and individuals for specific sections of the Plan.</p> <p>The revised Management Plan will largely be driven by the NEWP and Biodiversity 2020 and will use and build on significant work undertaken by SWT - ecological surveying, and mapping,</p>
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