

## Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Table 2017 - 2019

(Expand the boxes as appropriate, please see guidance ([www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment)) to assist with completion)

"I shall try to explain what "due regard" means and how the courts interpret it. The courts have made it clear that having due regard is **more than having a cursory glance** at a document before arriving at a preconceived conclusion. Due regard requires public authorities, in formulating a policy, to give equality considerations the weight which is **proportionate in the circumstances**, given the potential impact of the policy on equality. It is not a question of box-ticking; it requires the equality impact to be **considered rigorously and with an open mind.**"

**Baroness Thornton, March 2010**

**What are you completing the Impact Assessment on (which policy, service, MTFP reference, cluster etc)?**

**Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-2024**

**Version**

2

**Date**

October 2018

### **Section 1 – Description** of what is being impact assessed

Under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act), the Local Authorities administering the area of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have a duty to produce an AONB Management Plan.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing the primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.

Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

Bath & North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council have delegated the duty of producing the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan to the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership with work undertaken by the Mendip Hills AONB Unit. The current Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 was adopted by the above local authorities. Under the CRoW Act there is a requirement to review the Management Plan every 5 years and the current Plan is currently being reviewed through the Partnership.

The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership/Unit take the lead in monitoring the implementation of the Plan and the Partnership publishes an annual State of the Mendip Hills AONB Report, which includes monitoring information and a review of the work of the Mendip Hills AONB Unit.

To achieve the vision for the Mendip Hills AONB, the Partnership and stakeholders have set out objectives under 8 themes as follows:

Landscape Quality

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

Recreation, Access and Tourism

Natural Resources

Land Management

Development and Transport  
Participation

The draft Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 will be available shortly for consultation. Discussion and liaison with a range of Mendip Hills AONB stakeholders to support the review of the Management Plan has taken place, as outlined in our Statement of Community Consultation.

**Section 2A – People or communities that are targeted or could be affected** (taking particular note of the Protected Characteristic listed in action table)

The Mendip Hills AONB encompasses parts of five local authorities which include Bath & North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset County Council and includes local communities who live and work within the Mendip Hills and wider communities that live and work within reach of the Mendip Hills together with businesses within and visitors to the Mendip Hills AONB. Although the AONB embraces 28 parishes lying wholly or partly within its boundary there are few major settlements in the AONB, most are spring-line villages with only Priddy on the plateau itself.

**Section 2B – People who are delivering the policy or service**

Stakeholder consultation has taken place to support the review of the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan as outlined in our Statement of Community Consultation. A further 6-week wider consultation period on the draft Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) will take place at the end of November 2018.

The Management Plan is intended to be a shared strategy that will be of interest to the communities, parishes, residents, businesses, landowners and farmer, agencies, authorities, utilities, organisations and amenity groups operating within, or with an interest in, the Mendip Hills AONB. Once the draft Mendip Hills Management Plan 2019-2024 has been finalised, it will be put forward for adoption within the various local authorities. Once adopted by various authorities, the Management Plan will be considered a material consideration within planning and support the vision and objectives of the Mendip Hills AONB .

The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership produces the Management Plan on behalf of the local authorities, with the Mendip Hills AONB Unit supporting the work (drafting, consultation etc.) related to the Plan. The Mendip Hill AONB Partnership includes:

Somerset County Council  
North Somerset Council  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Mendip District Council,  
Sedgemoor District Council  
Mendip Hills AONB Unit  
National Trust  
National Farmers Union  
Natural England  
Somerset Wildlife Trust/Avon Wildlife Trust  
Bath & North East Somerset Parishes Representative  
North Somerset Parishes Representative  
Somerset Parishes Representative  
Mendip Society  
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

The work of the AONB Partnership is supported by a small AONB Staff Unit. The primary purpose of the AONB Staff Unit is:

- To provide a strategic, independent unit dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the Mendip Hills AONB.
- To co-ordinate and drive the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.

The Unit comprises an AONB Manager and Project Development Officer and other part-time staff including a Landscape Planning Officer, Support and Communication Officer, Volunteer Co-ordinator and Nature and Well-being Officer.

The work of the AONB Unit is supported by Volunteer Rangers who provide a visible presence in the Mendip Hills AONB, assist the AONB Unit in conserving, enhancing and promoting the appropriate use and enjoyment of the area. They provide a point of contact for visitors out on the ground and report back any issues to the AONB Unit. The AONB Unit also supports Young Rangers and Advanced Young Rangers who meet monthly to undertake a range of tasks and activities. There are also a range of volunteers who assist with a range of practical tasks, at events and as walk leaders.

**Section 3 – Evidence and data** used for the assessment (Attach documents where appropriate)

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/somerset-facts-and-figures/>  
<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/equality-information-booklet.pdf>  
[http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/census\\_2011\\_theme\\_summary\\_-\\_equalities\\_0.pdf](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/census_2011_theme_summary_-_equalities_0.pdf)

**Section 4 – Conclusions** drawn about the equalities impact (positive or negative) of the proposed change or new service/policy (Please use **prompt sheet** in the guidance for help with what to consider):

The Mendip Hills AONB provides a wide range of benefits to society. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. The AONB provides a range of ecosystem services to support communities including provisioning services (such as food, fuel), regulating services (such as pollination, climate regulation and carbon storage), cultural services (such as recreation, education) and supporting services (such as wildlife/biodiversity, nutrient cycling).

The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 has been considered to understand the potential impacts (positive or negative) as relates to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and other considerations such as rurality, low income).

The draft Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) sets out under paragraph 3.6.1 sets out that ‘The AONB landscape is a resource to be enjoyed by all sectors of our diverse society, for active, and quieter recreational pursuits. Outdoor recreation is proved to benefit people’s health and wellbeing through exercise, and opportunities to escape the pressure of everyday life. Being within a 30-minute drive from Bristol, Weston Super Mare and Bath, the Mendip Hills AONB is accessible to these urban populations, as well as the local rural communities’.

Policies under recreation, access and tourism objectives include:

*R1 Maintain, improve and promote public access and quiet recreational activities with measures to ensure access for all in accordance with the purposes of AONB designation.*

*R4 Support healthy lifestyles by encouraging more people to use the Mendip Hills for sustainable outdoor activities.*

The Delivery Plan to the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) will set out actions to support delivery of objectives.

Paragraph 3.10.6 within the draft Management Plan sets out 'Increasing people's knowledge and involvement amongst under-represented groups, particularly young people, the elderly, and those with disabilities requires targeted approaches. The Somerset AONBs have a joint Nature and Wellbeing Officer funded by Public Health. The officer has introduced groups to the AONB who would not normally visit. AONB Volunteers and Young Rangers regularly visit a care home in Cheddar'.

Policies under participation objectives include:

*P1 Increase the opportunities for volunteering and the range of people participating, to benefit the environment, people's health and well-being and local communities in and around the AONB.*

*P2 Encourage the involvement of local people and the wider community in the management of the AONB.*

*P3 Promote the Mendip Hills as an educational resource for all ages and encourage sharing of research and learning tools.*

The Delivery Plan to the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) will set out actions to support delivery of objectives.

It is intended that the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) will promote greater local community involvement in planning and conserving and enhancing the landscape of the Mendip Hills AONB. The Partnership expects this to have a positive effect on community cohesion.

There are no negative equality impacts currently identified within the draft Management Plan (2019-2024) and thus no actions are identified.

If you have identified any negative impacts, you will need to consider how these can be mitigated to either reduce or remove them. In the table below let us know what mitigation you will take. (Please add rows where needed)			
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed – can you mitigate the impacts? If you can how will you mitigate the impacts?	Who is responsible for the actions? When will the action be completed?	How will it be monitored? What is the expected outcome from the action?
<b>Age</b>			
<b>Disability</b>			
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>			
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>			
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>			
<b>Race</b> (including ethnicity or national origin, colour, nationality and Gypsies and Travellers)			
<b>Religion and Belief</b>			
<b>Sex</b>			
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			
<b>Other</b> (including caring responsibilities, rurality, low income, Military Status etc)			

<b>Section 6</b> - How will the assessment, consultation and outcomes be published and communicated? E.g. reflected in final strategy, published. What steps are in place to review the Impact Assessment	
Version 1 of the Equality Impact Assessment has been drafted as relates to the current draft of the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019. The EIA on the Management Plan will evolve and be updated as consultation and drafting of the updated Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan takes place. The draft Equalities Impact Assessment will also be made available together with consultation drafts of the revised Mendip Hills Management Plan 2019-2024.	
<b>Completed by:</b>	Cindy Carter (Landscape Planning Officer – Mendip Hills AONB Unit)
<b>Date</b>	October 2018
<b>Signed off by:</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

<b>Corporate Equality Manager sign off date:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by:</b> (officer name)	
<b>Review date:</b>	