

Ref.	Programme Theme	High-Level Actions / Projects	Delivery Partners	Delivery Years	AONB 5 Year Man Plan Objectives	AONB Special Qualities	Ecosystem Services	Defra 25 Year Environmental Goals	Outcomes / KPIs (measured by)
Management Plan Theme 1 - Landscape Quality									
1.1	Communicating our Special Qualities	Comms to general public, planning officers and decision makers on special qualities	AONB Unit	1-5	L3, L4, P3	All	c, g, h	F	Delivery of photo competition and a range of new promotional materials for specific audiences (AONB Unit)
1.2	Environment Centre	New AONB Visitor Centre and office base at Burrington Combe with focus on engaging interpretation about the AONB, appropriate and accessible for a wide audience	AONB Unit Holt Farms	1-5	L3, L4, P3	All	c, d, g, h	E, F, H	Completion of Visitor Centre (AONB Unit) Increase in no. of engagements, hits, followers, downloads, feedback (AONB Unit)
Management Plan Theme 2 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity									
2.1	Surveying	Creation and coordination of an inter-organisational survey group of volunteers and specialists, as well as coordination of survey data from various sources	AONB Unit	1-5	BG1, BG3	i	a	C, D, F	Increased % of land managed under higher level agri-environment schemes and uptake of Environmental Stewardship options (NE)
2.2	Joined up land management	Focus on enhancing linear networks such as hedgerows and dry stone walls and wildflower strips on farmland and road verges	AONB Unit (Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission)	1-5	BG2, BG4, D2	viii, ix, xi	a, e, f	A, C, F, G	Increased % of area that is tranquil (CPRE)
		Making Space for Butterflies	Somerset Wildlife Trust	1-5	BG1, BG2	ii, iv, x, xi	a	C, F, G	Increased % of SSSIs and geological SSSIs in favourable/ recovering condition (NE)
		Management of WT reserves and SSSIs to create bigger, better, more joined up habitats in priority Living Landscape areas	Somerset Wildlife Trust and Avon Wildlife Trust	1-5	BG1, BG2, BG4,	ii, viii, x	a, g	C, F, G, J	Improved in condition of priority habitats and populations of priority species diversity (NE / WT)
		Restoration of Dew Ponds	Somerset Reptile and Amphibian Group	2-3	BG1, BG3, BG5	iv, xii	a, b, g, h	B, C, E, F, G, G, J	
		Local Pollinator Strategy	Somerset Wildlife Trust	1-5	BG1, BG2, BG3	i, ii, iv, v, vii, viii, x, xi	a, d	A, B, C, D, E, G, I	
2.3	Promoting geology to public	Build on Discovering Black Down project to interpret geology through an engaging, innovative approach	AONB Unit	2-3	BG5, BG6	ii, iv, v, vi, viii, xi, xii, xiii	a, g, h	F	
Management Plan Theme 3 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage									
3.1	Historic Environment	Promoting rural and traditional skills and traditions with a focus on the mapping and repair of 'vulnerable' dry stone walls and training of local people in these skills	AONB Unit	1-5	H1, H3	iv, v, ix, xii	a, c, g, h	E, F	Increased % of Scheduled Monuments in favourable condition (EH)
3.2	Cultural Heritage	GIS mapping of people's views, priorities and memories of the landscape	AONB Unit	1-2	H1, H2	i, iii, xiii	a, c, g, h	F	Reduced number of listed and unlisted buildings and meterage of dry stone walls at risk / vulnerable (EH / AONB Unit)
		Deliver mini projects focussed on storytelling, historic tales, research of local history and land management over time, including interpretation of archaeology	AONB Unit	3-4	H1, H2	i, iv, v, vi, vii, xi, xii, xiii	c, g, h	F	Quantitative and qualitative data providing an understanding of cultural heritage through local people's views and visitor perception,(AONB Unit)
Management Plan Theme 4 - Recreation, Access & Tourism									
4.1	Promoting Responsible Recreation	Updating trail guides and re-publishing the Mendip Way book - promoting responsible recreation and balancing with conserving the landscape, through joined-up initiatives	AONB Unit (User/volunteer groups, Council RoW Teams, Cheddar Walking Group)	1-3	R1, R4	i, iii, iv, x, xiii	c	F, J	% employed in tourism (Defra) % of AONB accessible (NE)
		Develop the Walkers are Welcome scheme for Wells and support Cheddar Walking group with Cheddar scheme	AONB Unit (Cheddar Walking, Cheddar Parish Council, Wells City Council)	2-4	R2, R3, R4	xiii	c, h	F, J	Increase in length of Public Rights of Way and bridleways promoted and enhanced (NE / AONB Unit)
		Overarching audit of the current and potential future recreational pressures and opportunities within AONB	AONB Unit (consultant)	1-2	R2, R3, L1, BG4, D5	All	c, e, f, h	D, F, G	Walkers are Welcome scheme established in Wells and continuing in Cheddar (AONB Unit)
4.2	Access infrastructure improvements	Access and interpretation enhancements on the Mendip Way and Limestone Link. Supporting RoW teams with 'Adopt a Path' and 'Strimmer Scheme' and promoting responsible recreation through joined-up initiatives across sites	AONB Unit (Rambling groups, North Somerset Council, Somerset County Council, BANES Council)	1-5	R1, R4	xiii	c, h	E, F, J	Access and recreation audit produced (AONB Unit) Joined up signage and interpretation across the AONB (Various partners, AONB Unit)
		Chew Valley Lake Access Recreational Trail	BANES Council, Sustrans (Bristol Water, AONB Unit)	1-2	R1, R3, R4	vii, xiii	c, h	B, F	Consistent and reliable data on visitor numbers and hot spots in AONB (AONB Unit)
		Develop reliable and coordinated programme for recording est. numbers of visitors through annual counts and counters to establish a baseline / change	AONB Unit (landowner / managers)	1-5	R2, R3	i, iv, xiii	a, c, f, h	A, C, F, H, I, J	
		Dolberrow to Blackdown bridleway improvements	North Somerset Council	4-5	R1, R3, R4	xiii	c	F	
		Links to England Coast Path and Cotswold Way (via Mendip Way and Limestone Link)	North Somerset Council, BANES Council (AONB Unit)	1-5	R1, R2	ii, iii, xiii	c	F	

4.3	Destination Development	Update AONB brand and develop consistent signage and AONB branding on sites and village welcome road signs and at key AONB entrance points and gateways	AONB Unit (Parish, District, Unitary and Council Councils, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts)	2-4	R2, R4	xiii	c, d, h	F	
		Somerset as a destination, not a journey - Somerset AONBs working together to jointly promote the beauty and landscape of Somerset	AONB Units: Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, Blackdown Hills	1-2	R2	All	c, g, h	F, G	
Management Plan Theme 5 - Natural Resources									
5.1	Natural Capital	Audit and develop how the AONB Partnership records and monitors Natural Capital	AONB Unit (AONB partners)	1	N1	All	All	D, E, F, G	Increase in % area mapped and understanding of Natural Capital assets and ecosystem service flows (AONB Unit)
5.2	Water Catchment Based Approach	Work with Natural Processes to improve water quality and reduce flood risk (NFM) by assessing watercourses and adjacent land use and tackle failures under Water Framework Directive (with focus on Chew Valley)	Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust (AONB Unit, Environment Agency, West of England Rural Network, Bristol Water)	1-5	N1, N2, N3	vii, viii	a, b, e	B, D, E, G, I, J	Quantifying ecosystem services in £ economic terms and better understanding of natural capital within society Improvement in WFD indicators on tributaries within AONB
Management Plan Theme 6 - Land Management									
6.1	Promoting joined-up land management	Facilitation Fund and establishment of a joint grazing initiative	Somerset Wildlife Trust (AONB Unit, The National Trust, Longleat)	1-5	LM1, LM2	i, ii, iv, ix, xii	a, b, d, e,	B, C, D, E, G, I, J	Increase in % of woodland managed (Forestry Commission)
		Supporting Countryside Stewardship [NE]	Natural England (AONB partners)	1-5	LM1, LM2	i, ii, iv, ix, xii	a, b, d, e	A, C, D, E, G, I, J	Increase in suitable area of new woodland (Forestry Commission)
		Strengthen link and funding streams with the Local Nature Partnerships and Local Enterprise Partnerships	AONB Unit and partners	1-5	LM2, LM3, LM4	All	All	All	Management Plans created and followed for 3 important sites (AONB Unit, NE)
6.2	Habitat management with volunteers	Support practical habitat management through the development, training and support of volunteers	AONB Unit and partners	1-5	LM2, P1, BG3	ii, ix, xi, xiii	a, c, h	C, E, F, J	Number of farmers working with AONB partnership increased (AONB Unit, NE)
6.3	Improving management of key sites	Bringing Deer Leap, Blackmoor SSSI nature reserves and Burrington Commons into better and more sustainable management	AONB Unit (South West Heritage Trust, Sir David Wills, Natural England)	1-5	LM2, BG1	i, ii, iii, iv, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii	a, c, e, g, h	C, E, F, G, J	Increase in the number of practical conservation volunteer activities undertaken in the AONB (AONB Unit)
		Rock safety and stabilisation along Cheddar Gorge	Longleat	1	R2	ii, v, vi, viii, xiii	c, h	D, G, H, J	Improved management for visitor safety and aesthetics in Cheddar Gorge (Longleat, NT)
		Land acquisition and car park improvements near Crook Peak to reduce anti-social behaviour, improve land management and visitor facilities	The National Trust (AONB Unit)	3-4	LM2, R2	iii, viii, xiii	a, b, c, h	C, D, F, I	
Management Plan Theme 7 - Development & Transport									
7.1	Planning guidance to support conservation and enhancement	1. Development of paid service for Pre-application advice from the AONB Unit in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities. 2. Develop AONB planning guidance notes and Supplementary Planning Documents, including Landscape Character Assessment guidance / training	AONB Unit (Local Planning Authorities, Parish Councils)	1-2	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5	All	All	All	Increase in % of the AONB that is relatively tranquil and reduction in inappropriate number of planning applications (CPRE, NE) Protocol, suite of information and pre-app advice programme in place for planning advice and guidance (AONB Unit)
7.2	Responding to Planning Applications and Plans	1. Creation of a Planning Protocol. 2. Develop AONB Unit planning resource to enable wider coverage and response to planning applications within and in setting of the AONB	AONB Unit	2-4	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5,	All	All	All	Sustainable transport initiative(s) in place (AONB Unit / Local Authorities)
7.3	Sustainable Transport	Encouragement of sustainable transport options, enhancing Rights of Ways and cycle lanes, and reduction in traffic speeds and congestion of quieter routes, linking in with awareness campaign	AONB Unit (District, Unitary and County Councils and AONB partners)	2-5	D3, L1, R3	i, iv, xiii	b, c, e, f	A, D, E, G, H, I	
Management Plan Theme 8 - Participation									
8.1	Volunteer Development	Development of the AONB's Volunteer Rangers, Young Rangers and Practical Volunteer Programme	AONB Unit (Somerset County Council)	1-5	P1	All	a, c, h	C, E, F, J	Increase in number of volunteer hours and number of Volunteer Rangers and Young Rangers (AONB Unit)
8.2	Nature and Wellbeing	Work with groups and individuals with mental health conditions and special educational needs to deliver activities focussed on improving people's health and wellbeing through contact with nature / landscape	AONB Units: Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, Blackdown Hills (local groups, Public Health)	1-5	P1, P2	All	c, h	F	Increase in number of practical tasks and events delivered, with no reduction in quality (AONB Unit)
8.3	Public Events and Activities	Develop annual Mendip Rocks! festival for school groups, families and experts – showcasing geology in a diverse, engaging and innovative way	AONB Unit, Earth Science Centre and The Mendip Society	2-5	P2, P3	v, vi, ix, xiii	a, c, g, h	F	Increase in diversity / demographics of AONB volunteers and members of the public engaged (AONB Unit)
		Develop a programme of education / training sessions for a range of ages and abilities on special qualities	AONB Unit and partners	1-5	P2, P3	Various	c, g, h	F	Safe volunteer practices and procedures (AONB Unit)
8.4	Mendip Hills Fund	Secure further funding for the Mendip Hills Fund and support of local community groups through this mechanism to conserve and enhance the AONB	AONB Unit and Somerset Community Foundation	1-5	P2 <i>et al.</i>	Various	Various	Various	



8 x AONB 5 Year Management Plan Themes								
Theme	Landscape Quality	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	Recreation, Access & Tourism	Natural Resources	Land Management	Development & Transport	Participation
Key	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

10 x Defra 25 Year Environment Plan Goals / Benefits										
Goal	Clean Air	Clean & Plentiful Water	Thriving plants & wildlife	Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards	Using resources from nature more sustainably & efficiently	Enhancing beauty, heritage & engagement with the natural environment	Mitigating & adapting to climate change	Minimising waste	Managing exposure to chemicals	Enhancing biosecurity
Key	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J

Ecosystem Services / Natural Capital Benefits										
Service	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Water quality, quantity and flow	Physical and mental health, wellbeing and enjoyment	High quality food / products	Climate regulation incl. carbon and soil health	Air quality	Sense of history and culture	Sense of place and community		
Key	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h		

13 x AONB Special Qualities													
Quality	Dark skies, tranquillity, sense of remoteness, naturalness	Distinctive limestone ridges and scarp slopes	Views towards the hills and panoramic views out	Sparsely populated plateau	Diverse and visible geology	Caves	Cheddar, Chew Valley & Blagdon Lakes	The Chew Valley & Yeo Valley	Dry stone walls	Steep south-facing slopes	Ancient woodland combs	Evidence of human settlement across the years	Landscape enjoyed by large numbers of people
Key	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x	xi	xii	xiii

11 x AONB Unit Core Functions													
Function	Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the AONB Management Plan	Raising awareness of the AONB, and promoting the AONB vision and the management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside	Advising upon, facilitating and coordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan	Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service to attain the highest possible standards in countryside management	Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets	Monitoring AONB landscape condition	Accessing resources for management activities	Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities. Participating in and promoting joint working between AONBs and across protected landscapes family	Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level	Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB	Providing landscape related planning advice		

AONB 5 Year Management Plan (2019-2024)	
Theme	Objective
Landscape Quality	L1 Promote appropriate management to ensure that the distinctive Mendip Hills AONB landscape is conserved and enhanced.
	L2 Provide opportunities to acquire and develop skills required to care for and promote the landscape and its special qualities.
	L3 Increase awareness and appreciation of the purposes of designation and the special qualities of the AONB.
	L4 Increase awareness of the benefits of supporting local products and services that help conserve and enhance the landscape.
Biodiversity & Geodiversity	BG1 Ensure that there is no net loss of characteristic habitats and species.
	BG2 Promote a landscape scale approach to the conservation and enhancement of ecological networks within and adjoining the AONB.
	BG3 Increase monitoring and awareness of the biodiversity resource of the Mendip Hills AONB so that it is sufficiently understood to continue to guide the successful conservation of the characteristic habitats and species.
	BG4 Promote a holistic approach to implementing AONB Management Plan objectives and National Character Area Statements of Opportunity.
	BG5 Recognise and celebrate geological sites and features of the Mendip Hills AONB to ensure the successful conservation both of the geology and wildlife habitat they provide.
	BG6 Increase awareness of the Mendip Hills geology, particularly cave systems in relation to the importance they play in water management and water supply.
Historic Env & Cultural Heritage	H1 Improve the recording, interpretation and understanding of all aspects of the AONBs historic environment to ensure local communities and visitors enjoy a rich experience of the sense of place.
	H2 Increase awareness and communicate the significance of the high quality historic environment of the Mendip Hills AONB.
	H3 Promote appropriate management of sites, structures and landscapes designated for their international, national, regional or local importance in the historic environment to ensure no further loss of heritage assets.
Recreation, Access & Tourism	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.
	R2 Support the development of tourism that benefits the local economy, conserves and enhances the landscape and improves understanding of the Mendip Hills.
	R3 Develop and promote more sustainable methods of travel to and around the AONB for enjoyment and recreation.
	R4 Support healthy lifestyles by encouraging more people to use the Mendip Hills for sustainable outdoor activities.
Natural Resources	N1 Recognize and promote the benefits and relevance of the AONB as a valuable source of ecosystem services, economic and health benefits.
	N2 Promote conservation of water resources and enhance their quality taking measures to reduce low flows and flooding by appropriate management and use.
	N3 Promote sustainable management of soils in accordance with best practice to minimise erosion and water pollution and maximise resilience to drought.
Land Management	LM1 Support and promote viable farming to ensure it remains as the principle land use and contributes to maintaining the special qualities of the AONB.
	LM2 Support and promote rural land management that conserves and enhances natural resources, including biodiversity special to the Mendip Hills, landscape character the historic environment and aids public awareness and enjoyment of the Mendip Hills.
	LM3 Support and promote a sustainable woodland economy that enhances the Mendip Hills AONB woodlands & wider landscape with targeted woodland management & creation in appropriate locations supporting wood fuel & local community opportunities.
	LM4 Influence the use, restoration and after use of all quarries to minimise the impact on the landscape and to be compatible with the purposes of designation.
Development & Transport	D1 Working with the local planning authorities, ensure that development in the AONB and its setting is of a nature, scale, location and design that meets community need without compromising the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB.
	D2 Working with the local highways authorities, ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are fully respected in the planning, design, provision and management of all types of transport and associated infrastructure.
	D3 Encourage reduction in carbon emissions within the AONB through reducing energy consumption, applying energy conservation measures, encouraging more sustainable patterns of development, and utilising renewable energy generation technologies that are of an appropriate type and scale for their siting.
	D4 Ensure issues of importance for the management of the AONB landscape are fully reflected in strategies and plans produced by other agencies and local communities.
	D5 The impact of development on the protected landscape and the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB would need to be carefully considered, and where supported would require appropriate and acceptable mitigation measures.
Participation	P1 Increase the opportunities for volunteering and the range of people participating, to benefit the environment, people's health and wellbeing 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.