

*Background Papers, if any, are specified at the end of the Report*

**CHILTERN AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014 – 2019  
ENDORSEMENT**

**Contact Officer:** David Waker (01494 732267)

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That the AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019 be endorsed as a material consideration in the exercise of the Council's planning powers.**

**Relationship to Council Objectives**

*Objective : we will strive to conserve the environment and promote sustainability.*

- 1. Conserve our valuable heritage including the AONB*

**Implications**

- (i) A key decision*
- (ii) This report does not affect the Policy and Budgetary Framework.*

**Financial Implications**

*None specifically in relation to the Management Plan although the Council does contribute to the costs of operating the AONB Board.*

**Risk Implications**

*Failure to endorse the AONB Management Plan would mean it has less weight in the consideration of planning applications and the use of the Chiltern Buildings Design Guide in assessing applications could be limited as a result.*

**Equalities Implications**

*The AONB Management Plan relates to the management of the AONB as a whole and access to it. There are no equalities implications of this report.*

## **Sustainability Implications**

*The Management Plan reflects the AONB Board's duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. Particular reference is made to the issue of climate change, sustainable management of landscape and water resources and sustainable access to the AONB. The use of sustainable materials is promoted through the use of local resources, with renewable energy encouraged in suitable locations. The Management Plan is considered to make a positive contribution to sustainability.*

## **Report**

- 1 Following adoption of The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan in March 2014 the AONB Board have requested that the Council endorse the document as a material consideration in the exercise of its planning powers. A copy of the Management Plan has been placed in the Members Room and is available on the AONB Board's website - [http://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/ManagementPlan/Management%20Plan%202014-19/chilterns\\_management\\_plan\\_2014-19\\_final.pdf](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/ManagementPlan/Management%20Plan%202014-19/chilterns_management_plan_2014-19_final.pdf)

## **Background**

- 2 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Draft Management Plan 2014 -2019 was reported to Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013 (minute 56 refers). That report set out the history of the AONB, the formation of the AONB Board and described the main elements of the draft Management Plan.
- 3 The Council has supported the AONB since its original designation. The Council's own priorities, goals and promises specifically refer to the conserving the environment and our valuable heritage including the AONB (Priorities, Goals and Promises 2014-2018 – we will strive to conserve the environment and promote sustainability – 1 – conserve the environment 4<sup>th</sup> bullet – conserve our valuable heritage including the AONB). Indeed it is a statutory duty of all public bodies to conserve and enhance the Natural Beauty of the AONB.
- 4 A summary leaflet entitled 'Keeping the Chilterns Special An Introduction to the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019' was distributed to all members via the dispatch pigeon holes in mid June 2014. This leaflet set out the vision for the AONB, the special qualities of the AONB, the pressures facing the AONB and the themes of the Management Plan.

## **Government Guidance**

- 5 Government guidance<sup>1</sup> states that planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment. Local planning authorities should therefore have regard to AONB management plans because these documents demonstrate partnership working and delivery of designation objectives. AONB management plans do not form part of the statutory development plan but can help to set the strategic context for development by providing evidence and principles for development within the AONB. These principles should be taken account of in local planning authorities' local plans and any neighbourhood plans in AONB areas. AONB Management Plans may also be material considerations in making decisions on individual planning applications.

### **The Adopted Development Plan**

- 6 The currently adopted Development Plan for this District includes the adopted Core Strategy. The Core Strategy includes reference to the AONB in its natural environment section. The supporting text (Para 14.2) refers to the District Council and its partners working to support the aims of the AONB Management Plan. Policy CS22 deals with development proposals in the AONB. Clause e) states that development proposals will be assessed against the broad aims of the current AONB Management Plan. Policy LSQ1 of the Adopted Local Plan also refers to the AONB. Therefore the Council's own Development Plan commits the Council to have regard to the AONB Management Plan in its planning decision making process.

### **Management Plan policies**

- 7 The officer's report on the draft plan noted the increase in policies over the previous management plan. In the Council's response letter to the consultation draft it was suggested that the opportunity should be taken in finalising the plan to see if all the policies were really necessary or if some could be combined or even dropped in the final plan. However, in the final plan the numbers of policies have actually slightly increased. It is, however, the AONB Board's Management Plan and the number of policies in itself does not make the plan unworkable.

### **Conclusion**

- 8 The AONB Board have adopted the Management Plan and wish each council to endorse it. As set out in the report on the draft plan this Council had no major concerns with its content. This Council has already expressed its support for the plan and has a duty to have regard to the AONB in exercising its functions. It is therefore recommended that the Council endorse the Chilterns AONB Management plan for 2014-2019.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance – Does planning need to take account of management plans for Areas of outstanding Natural Beauty?

**Background Papers:** *Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-2019  
Consultation Draft September 2013  
Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Management Plan  
2014- 2019 – A Framework for Action*

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