

**Minutes of AONB Management Plan Review Work Group
Tuesday 04 March 2008 - Upper Conference Room, Seaclose**

Present:

Tony Tutton	Chairman, AONB Steering Committee (Chair)
Denis Russell	Vice Chairman and Town and Parish Portfolio Holder - Steering Committee
Vicky Basford	Historic Environment Portfolio Holder - Steering Committee
David Court	Coastal Portfolio Holder - Steering Committee
Andy Gordon	Natural England
Julie Danby	Natural England
Councillor Vanessa Churchman	Isle of Wight Council
Councillor John Hobart	Isle of Wight Council
John Brownscombe	AONB Lead Officer
Nicky Rogers	AONB Planning Officer
Fiona Hanna	AONB Communications Officer
Carrie McDowell	AONB Assistant

Apologies:

Richard Grogan	Nature Conservation Portfolio Holder - Steering Committee
Jill Green	Recreation Portfolio Holder - Steering Committee

2) Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings of the last meeting.

Environmental Stewardship options: these have now been provided by Natural England, and thanks were expressed for their help in this matter, as the data has proved to be very useful.

3) Terms of Reference

It was agreed that that amended Terms of Reference could be signed off.

4) Strategic Environment Assessment scoping document

A copy of this document was circulated at the meeting, and has now been sent to key consultees the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and the Local Authority for their comments. An amendment is required to the HEAP areas on Page 7, to include West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge.

Statutory consultees have until the end of March to provide detailed thoughts or concerns about the proposed approach, and the document has been based on best practice guidance provided by Natural England. Other comments have been received, but it was felt that only minor amendments were required.

5) Feedback from the Policy and Policy Objectives workshop/survey

A copy of the survey was circulated to the meeting, and it was advised that there was an amendment to make regarding the number of questions which should be 25 not 73. On the

whole, attendees felt the Policies and Policy Objectives of the Management Plan within the individual themes remain relevant, although there was more uncertainty in the themes under the generic heading of AONB People. This either means we are not wording our policies correctly to reflect our role, or Partners do not know whether it is something in which we should be actively involved as indicated by the Plan, and we hope it is the former. It is suggested that in the AONB People theme, we provide an overview of the context of the section, followed by simple policies that are not repeated and better reflect our role.

In the earlier workshop covering Threats and Challenges, there seemed to be a perception that the AONB Unit is delivering everything, rather than the Partnership as a whole, with everyone contributing information on what they are doing as an organisation to deliver against the aims and objectives as a consensus approach for the AONB. The details of the on-line surveys and reports on the workshops are available on our website.

6) Workshop - Delivering the Plan 18 March 2008 - Outline of Event

The next workshop will be held on 18 March 2008 in the Medina Room at Northwood House. We need to identify the priorities over the next five year cycle of the Management Plan, and there were two suggestions as to how this might be achieved:-

- a) We use the same format as previous workshops, and ask the Partnership to define what we should be doing over the next five years. We look at the Plan and list individual projects we want to do, identify those that have been completed and those that are still outstanding.
- b) We identify a specific theme e.g. Highways, and identify Partnership projects and priorities that would fit into this theme, as a way of having more profile for what we do.

There was much discussion on this subject, with the meeting agreeing that this was a good outline for the workshop. It was also felt the revised document should include information about the core function of the AONB Unit, with a leaner Plan containing priorities for each year, but also allowing flexibility to deal with any changes that might occur.

We should not, however, lose sight of the landscape scale approach, the importance of working with others to deliver activities against this approach and any new threats and pressures that may occur. We also need to discuss AONB Management Zones, which could be a good way to articulate the AONB giving communities a resonance with their local area, and the Partnership a more targeted approach to delivery.

7) Departure of Lead Officer and implications on the Review

JB will be leaving his post as Lead Officer on 09 April 2008. He feels the AONB Unit and the Partnership, have achieved a great deal in the past six years, and with the focus on landscape and environment as an integral part of the Local Development Framework, the AONB Partnership are in a strong position go to forward within this agenda.

The AONB Unit have had meetings with Bill Murphy, IW Council and Tony Tutton, Chairman of the IW AONB Partnership Steering Committee to discuss the implications of John's departure, and it is hoped a replacement could be in post by mid-July. It was expected that there would be a high level of interest in the post, because of the excellent skills base and

increased numbers of staff within the national family, with deputies wanting promotion to a more senior role or other Lead Officers seeking a change of focus.

The programme for the Management Plan Review is proceeding well, with the third workshop being held on 18 March followed by individual meetings with stakeholders and the launch of the draft plan on 16 May. If there should be any delay in recruiting a new Lead Officer, this may impact on the timetable for the Review but in any case, it was felt the public consultation should be put back to September/October, so the new Lead Officer can have ownership of this piece of work and its results. Should there be any delay in the timetable for the Review, this will need to be discussed by Natural England, IW Council and the AONB Steering Committee.

On behalf of the Work Group T Tutton wished JB luck in his new venture. It was felt that under his leadership, the AONB Unit had considerably raised the profile of the AONB, and provided a greater understanding of its importance in conserving and enhancing the landscape.

8) Any Other Business

AG advised that Helen Phillips, Chief Executive of Natural England, together with the Chief Executive of English Heritage will be visiting the Island on 09-10 July 2008. An itinerary is being prepared to link the areas and places visited with the AONB.

An HLS Targeting Meeting is being held on 20 March 2008, and although AG will be giving a presentation, his remit will not cover any queries outside the subject of biodiversity. Concern was expressed that the individual disciplines had been split, as it was felt these should have been kept together on a regional basis.

9) Date and subject of next meeting

It was agreed the next Work Group meeting would follow that of the Isle of Wight AONB Steering Committee, which will be held on 08 May 2008. Further details will be circulated prior to the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.25 p.m.

cdm
10 March 2008